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THESIS

HOW IS THE UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY DEVELOPING AND PREPARING SURFACE WARFARE OFFICERS: A NEEDS ANALYSIS OF THE SWO LEADERSHIP CAPSTONE COURSE
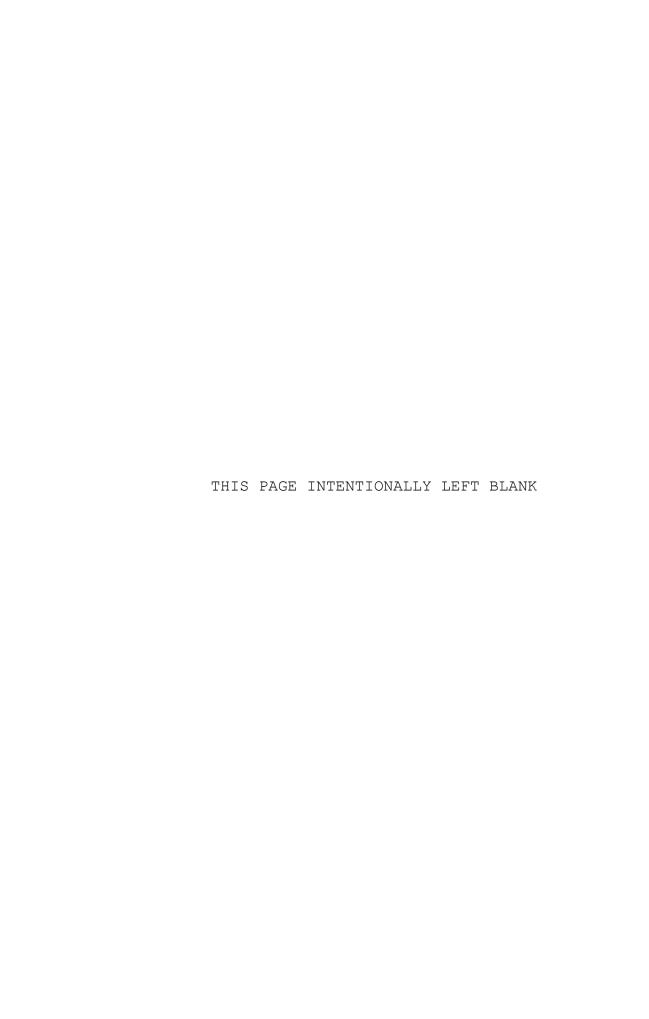
by

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June 2007

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13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words)

As the United States Naval Academy undertakes an institution-wide curriculum review, questions have been raised regarding the composition of course material, and the allocation of credit hours for its First Class Leadership Capstone courses. This study analyzes the needs of the Surface Warfare Officer Leadership Capstone Course at USNA. The purpose of this research is to use qualitative data to determine how the USNA SWO Leadership Capstone Course should be structured, and to determine the appropriate balance between leadership education and practical training. The research also determines whether or not there is a gap between current course content and the expectations of Commanding Officers, Executive Officers, Department Heads, and Division Officers in the Fleet, with respect to the knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes Ensigns should possess on the day they arrive onboard their first ship. In addition to holding focus groups with course instructors and faculty coordinators, interviews were conducted with prospective Commanding Officers, prospective Executive Officers, prospective Department Heads, and Ensigns enrolled in the Division Officer's Course at Surface Warfare Officer School Command, Newport, RI.

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HOW IS THE UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY DEVELOPING AND PREPARING SURFACE WARFARE OFFICERS: A NEEDS ANALYSIS OF THE SWO LEADERSHIP CAPSTONE COURSE.

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iii

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ABSTRACT

As the United States Naval Academy undertakes an institution-wide curriculum review, questions have been raised regarding the composition of course material, and the allocation of credit hours for its First Class Leadership Capstone courses. This study analyzes the needs of the Surface Warfare Officer Leadership Capstone Course at USNA. The purpose of this research is to use qualitative data to determine how the USNA SWO Leadership Capstone Course should be structured, and to determine the appropriate balance between leadership education and practical training. The research also determines whether or not there is a gap between current course content and the expectations of Commanding Officers, Executive Officers, Department Heads, and Division Officers in the Fleet, with respect to the knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes Ensigns should possess on the day they arrive onboard their first ship. In addition to holding focus groups with course instructors and faculty coordinators, interviews were conducted with prospective Commanding Officers, prospective Executive Officers, prospective Department Heads, and Ensigns enrolled in the Division Officer's Course at Surface Warfare Officer School Command, Newport, RI.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

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LIST OF TABLES

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. USNA ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW

> At the United States Naval Academy, our focus is on producing combat leaders for our Navy and Marine Corps. In fact, the one thing that makes us unique among other colleges and universities is our mission, which has remained essentially unchanged since 1845 (Rempt, 2005b, p. 5)

For over 150 years, the faculty and staff of the United States Naval Academy (USNA) have satisfied their mission of developing "Midshipmen morally, mentally, and physically" (Rempt, 2006a, p.3). However, since the Naval Academy was founded, the process by which this mission is accomplished has come under periodic review. In 2005 the USNA Superintendent directed an institution-wide, internal academic program review. "The basic questions this review sought to address were (1) whether the Academy is educating its graduates to meet the requirements of the Naval Service, and (2) whether [the Academy is] doing so in the most effective and efficient way" (Rempt, 2005a, p. 1).

During the review process, spokespersons from each academic division proposed changes they argued would increase the effectiveness and/or efficiency of the USNA academic program. One proposed change is a reduction of the minimum number of credit hours required for graduation to 138, which necessitates a reduction of the number of credit hours allocated for Officer Development (ODEV) and Professional Development (PRODEV) curricula. Because of this proposed requirement, the ODEV and PRODEV Divisions have been tasked with reviewing their curricula, and investigating the impact of reducing the number of credit

hours allocated for their disciplines from twenty-one to a total of eighteen hours (Athens, Campbell, Thomas, Rubel, 2005). The focus of this research is one of the changes that must be incorporated into the ODEV and PRODEV curricula.

B. OFFICER DEVELOPMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISIONS

The United States Naval Academy, with its civilian and military faculty and staff, is by design suited to execute its vision of "Providing leaders of great character, competence, vision and drive to transform the Navy and Marine Corps, and serve the nation in a century of promise and uncertainty" (Rempt, 2005c, p.4). To fulfill its mission and achieve this vision, the Naval Academy has constructed a curriculum that consists of the following fundamental elements:

-core requirements in engineering, natural sciences, the humanities and social sciences, to assure that graduates are able to think, solve problems and express conclusions clearly;

- an academic major that permits a midshipman to explore a discipline in some depth and prepare for graduate level work (USNA Admissions, 2005, p. 55).

The Officer Development and Professional Development Divisions are responsible for the third fundamental element that is made up of "core academic courses and practical training to teach the professional and leadership skills required of Navy and Marine Corps officers" (USNA Admissions, 2005, p. 55). Although both divisions are charged with preparing Midshipmen to receive a commission, each is distinctly and fundamentally different.

Officer Development Division consists of the Leadership, Ethics, and Law (LEL), and Character Development Departments; and the Honor Program. The goal of the Officer Development Division is to "integrate the moral, ethical, and character development of midshipmen across every aspect of the Naval Academy experience" (ODEV Homepage, 2006, p.1). These experiences include academic coursework in ethics, leadership, and behavioral science curricula, Brigade leadership, athletics, and summer training, among others. Using the classroom as a setting, this integrated program focuses more on leadership education and theory than practical training.

The Professional Development Division is comprised of the Professional Programs and the Seamanship and Navigation Departments (SEANAV). The Department of Professional Programs oversees the summer training and career information programs at the Naval Academy, while SEANAV serves as the academic arm of the division. SEANAV is responsible for developing the practical skills Midshipmen need to become successful Navy and Marine Corps Officers. Thus, unlike ODEV, the PRODEV Division may be seen as focusing more on training than education (PRODEV Homepage, 2006, p.1).

These two divisions, who have different but equally significant goals, have been tasked with collaborating on the design of a revised NL40X curriculum that is intended to serve as the last ODEV/PRODEV course of a Midshipman's four years at USNA. Therefore, an analysis must be conducted to determine which changes to the current NL40X curricula are appropriate, so that the education and training potential of the course is maximized. Should the

focus of the course be a culminating leadership, character, and moral education experience (a true capstone), should it be focused on practical, warfare community specific training (a practicum), or is it possible and practical to focus on both?

To make the issue more complicated, NL40X courses are organized according to warfare community, each of which has unique training and educational needs. Traditionally, NL40X courses have been primarily tailored to provide First Class Midshipmen with the knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes (KSAA's) needed for the next step of their career. Unlike all other warfare communities, the Surface Warfare Officer Community, has no follow-on school; SWO Ensigns are trained by coupling the Division Officer at Sea Program (DOSP) computer based training (CBT) modules with hands on experience. Thus, NL401, the focus of this research, is the last period of dedicated classroom instruction our future Surface Warriors will receive before reporting aboard their first ship as Division Officers (DIVO's).

C.   PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

The purpose of this research is to improve the effectiveness and quality of USNA Ensigns reporting to their initial Division Officer tours aboard ships. This study will use qualitative data to determine how the USNA Surface Warfare Officer Leadership Capstone Course (NL401) should be structured, so that the curriculum approaches an appropriate balance between the goals of the Officer Development and Professional Development Divisions; a balance between professional education and practical

training. The research will also determine whether or not there is a gap between USNA graduate performance and the expectations of Commanding Officers (COs), Executive Officers (XOs), Department Heads (DHs), and Division Officers (DIVOs) in the Fleet, and whether or not NL401 can provide SWO Ensigns the knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes (KSAAs) they are expected to possess on the day they arrive onboard their first ships.

D.   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The primary research question for this study is:

- To maximize the educational and training opportunity of NL401, how should the course be structured, so that a balance is struck between character, ethical, and leadership education, and practical training?

The secondary research questions are:

- Is there a gap between the content of NL401 and the KSAAs Ensigns are expected to possess the day they arrive onboard their first ships?

- Can/Will the NL401 curriculum be improved by incorporating elements of the Division Officer at Sea Program (DOSP) Computed Based Training (CBT) modules into the curriculum?

- Is the Naval Academy taking full advantage of the unique training opportunities available to them, such as simulators, Yard Patrol Craft, and Sailing Programs?

- Is there or should there be a mechanism in place to receive feedback from the fleet on the effectiveness of the NL401 curriculum?

E.   SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The scope of this thesis includes (1) an assessment of the education and training needs of a Midshipman enrolled in the SWO Leadership Capstone Course (NL401) at the United States Naval Academy, (2) a determination of the proper

balance between the ethical, character, leadership, and warfare community specific development of a First Class Midshipman who selected Surface Warfare, (3) an identification and definitions of the essential knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes (KSAAs) required of all Surface Warfare selected Ensigns reporting to their first sea-going commands, and (4) a prioritization of these KSAAs from the perspectives of various levels of SWO leadership. Because NL401 is the last classroom time available for training and educating future Surface Warfare Officers before they report to their first ships, it must be utilized effectively and the time allocated for it used efficiently.

Interviews with varying levels of Surface Warfare leadership (O-1 to O-5, and various ship types) were conducted at Surface Warfare Officers School Command (SWOSCOLCOM), Newport, RI and at USNA. The interviews were held in the spring of 2006. Those interviewed had previous operational exposure to the Division Officer at Sea Program, and had expert knowledge of the subject. During the interviews they were asked to comment on what they believed to be the core competencies of Ensigns in the Surface Force on the day they arrive onboard their first ships (training and educational goals of NL401), what they believed to be the most effective way USNA can achieve these competencies, what they believed the purpose of NL401 should be, and various other related questions.

In addition to active-duty Surface Warfare Officers enrolled in curricula at Surface Warfare Officers School Command and stationed at USNA, two focus groups at USNA were held. The intention of these focus groups was to gain

insight from two sets of critical NL401 stakeholders who would presumably explore the issues from different angles than the Fleet. The first group was composed of sixteen NL401 instructors. These instructors had different levels of experience and involvement with the course and ODEV/PRODEV curricula. All instructors were active duty Surface Warfare Officers with a variety of fleet experience, and the vast majority had no background or training in teaching or designing college level material. The other focus group was composed of a panel of Distinguished Military Professors (retired military and reserve personnel), Permanent Military Professors (active duty USN), and the Chairman of the Leadership, Ethics and Law Department (active duty O-6).

F.   LIMITATIONS

This study uses qualitative data to provide an expansive, exploratory view of the needs and responsibilities of, and the relationships between the Surface Warfare Officer (SWO) community, USNA, ODEV/PRODEV Divisions and their curricula, and NL401. These relationships will are examined in the context of current Fleet operations and policies, namely the 2002 elimination of the six-month Division Officer's Course at SWOSCOLCOM in favor of the Division Officer at Sea Program (DOSP). Implementation of the DOSP shifted the responsibility for initial accession training from SWOSCOLCOM to the Fleet, and has raised concerns in the SWO community (Vaas, 2004). Because of the relatively short time the program has been in effect and the issues it has raised, biased interviews from Fleet personnel were expected. Active-duty respondents often wanted to concentrate discussion around the pros and

cons of DOSP, instead of focusing on the needs of the course. However, when designing focus group and interview protocols, care was taken to minimize its effects.

G. ORGANIZATION OF STUDY

This thesis is organized into six chapters. The first chapter introduces the topic, and explains the potential benefits, purpose, scope, methodology, and limitations of the study. Chapter II provides background information. It includes a discussion of current USNA policies, and leadership education and professional development curricula, as well as the history and evolution of the Division Officer at Sea Program. Chapter III reviews published literature pertaining to leadership and education, educational and training needs assessments, KSAAs, and capstone courses in higher education. Chapter IV discusses the methodology of the study, outlines study participants, and describes the interview and focus group formats used. Chapter V presents the data collected from the interviews and focus groups. The data is presented according to the training and educational identified in the research. Also, the significance and prioritization of each need is discussed. Chapter VI summarizes the results, draws conclusions about current NL401 content and structure, and provides recommendations for improving the structure and content of the course.

II. BACKGROUND

A. CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the relationships among USNA strategy, policy, core leadership and professional education and training curricula, and current Surface Warfare Officer fleet training programs. These relationships provide context for understanding the impact and importance of restructuring NL401. This chapter provides a background of the Naval Academy's Strategic Plan, the mission and vision of the United States Naval Academy, desired strategic outcomes, strategies to achieve the USNA vision, and the core academic courses and practical training specifically intended to prepare Midshipmen for service in the Navy and Marine Corps. The sum of these character, leadership and professional education curricula and experiences is commonly referred to as the USNA Leadership Continuum. Next, background on the First Class Leadership Capstone Course and the Surface Warfare Officer Leadership Capstone Course (NL401) will be presented. Lastly, the background and evolution of the Surface Navy's Division Officer at Sea Program is discussed, as well as the impact its implementation has had on NL401.

B. USNA STRATEGIC PLAN, MISSION, AND STATEMENT OF STRATEGIC VISION

1. USNA Strategic Plan

The Naval Academy's Strategic Plan…is our shared road map to the future. It provides the foresight and focus to make decisions that will benefit the Brigade of Midshipmen and the Naval Academy for the next 10 years. The plan will help insure that

we avoid mission drift and maintain the appropriate balance between academic, professional, and athletic programs. When kept in balance, these are complimentary programs at our premier leadership institution. (Rempt, 2005c, p. 2)

In 1998, under the supervision of the Superintendent, the United States Naval Academy published its first Strategic Plan. The purpose of the plan was to solicit input from USNA stakeholders that would provide guidance and direction for the Naval Academy for the upcoming decade. "Alumni, volunteers, faculty, administration, parents and friends, as well as the Board of Visitors" were asked how they believed the Naval Academy could be improved (Rempt, 2005c, p.2). The inputs were compiled and considered, and published by Senior USNA leadership in 2001, and "recast in 2005/2006" (Rempt, 2005c, p.2).

2. USNA Mission

During the 1998 strategic planning process, the Core Planning Team, which was chaired by the Commandant of Midshipmen, and included members such as President of the Faculty Senate, Director of Professional Development, Naval Academy Athletic Association Associate Director, and Brigade of Midshipmen representative, "reaffirmed the continuing validity of the existing USNA Mission Statement:

> To develop midshipmen morally, mentally and physically and to imbue them with the highest ideals of duty, honor and loyalty in order to provide graduates who are dedicated to a career of naval service and have potential for future development in mind and character to assume the highest responsibilities of command, citizenship and government. (USNA Superintendent and Various, 1999, p.6)

This mission encompasses the mandates of the institution and identifies the Naval Academy's reason for existence (Bryson, 1995). Following the validation of the mission statement, the Core Planning Team created a Naval Academy "statement of strategic vision."

3.   USNA Statement of Strategic Vision

When establishing a vision for an organization, those involved with the strategic planning process develop an idea of what the organization "should look like once it has successfully implemented its strategies and achieved its full potential" (Bryson, 1995, p.35). In the case of the Naval Academy, stakeholders in the 1998 strategic planning process reached consensus on a three-part statement of strategic vision. This statement is comprised of a succinct vision, strategic outcomes, and strategies. "The succinct Vision describes what the Academy aspires to accomplish: Provide leaders of great character, competence, vision, and drive to transform the Navy and Marine Corps, and serve the nation in a century of promise and uncertainty" (USNA Superintendent and Various, 1999, p.7).

a.   *Strategic Outcomes*

The second aspects of the statement of strategic vision are strategic outcomes. These are results the Naval Academy wishes to attribute to itself as an institution and to its graduates. USNA stakeholders envision the Naval Academy as the premier accession source for Navy and Marine Corps Officers; officers who are equipped with the knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes (KSAAs) to make lifelong contributions to the welfare of our nation. In addition to these institutional attributes, the following

list of graduate attributes was created as part of USNA's espoused strategic outcomes:

- Graduates who are prepared to lead in combat

- Courageous leaders who take responsibility for their personal and professional decisions and actions

- Role models of ethical behavior and moral conduct

- Exemplars of academic, technical and tactical competence

- Individuals with a passion and commitment to lifelong learning and physical fitness

- Highly effective communicators

- Leaders who recognize and value individual excellence regardless of cultural or ethnic background

- Graduates who are able to understand and integrate geopolitical complexities in their decision making across the spectrum of military operations

- Patriots who epitomize the rich heritage, honor and traditions of the Navy, Marine Corps and our country (USNA Superintendent and Various, 1999, p.7)

b. *Strategy to Achieve Vision*

The strategy to achieve the Naval Academy's vision is composed of eight fundamental and complimentary elements. Among them are academic and admissions excellence, effective communications, physical fitness excellence, naval heritage, and quality of life for USNA students. However, the remaining two strategic elements, character building, and leadership and professional excellence, are the responsibility of the ODEV and PRODEV divisions. These elements and the appropriate balance between them are the focus of this thesis.

12

In summary, the 1998 USNA Strategic Plan Core Planning Team first affirmed the Academy's mission. Grounded in the mission, they then created a three-part statement of strategic vision. This statement is comprised of a succinct vision, strategic outcomes and finally, a strategy to achieve their vision. In 2005 the strategic plan was recast, mandating that the elements of the 1998 USNA Strategic Plan remain at the forefront of USNA goals, policies, programs, and curricula. Concurrently, the USNA Superintendent directed an Academic Program Review in 2005 to determine whether or not USNA was meeting the Academy's mission and vision, and the needs of the Fleet, in the most effective and efficient way. As a result, changes have occurred and have been proposed within the ODEV/PRODEV organization and curricula. These proposed changes necessitate an analysis of the USNA Leadership Continuum and in turn NL401.

C. USNA CHARACTER, LEADERSHIP, AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING CONTINUUM

1. Character Building and Leadership and Professional Excellence

Character building, and leadership and professional excellence are central to achieving USNA's vision of developing leaders who will guide the Navy and Marine Corps in the 21st Century. The United States Naval Academy defines character building as:

- Doing the "right thing" & promoting selfless service
- Ensuring moral development & character building permeate the Naval Academy experience
- Inculcating the core values of honor, courage and commitment

13

- Promoting a lifetime commitment to the highest standards of moral and ethical behavior (USNA Superintendent and Various, 1999, p.8)

According to the Strategic Plan, leadership and professional excellence will be achieved by:

- Preparing midshipmen for the opportunities of command & the challenges & realities of combat leadership

- Imbuing midshipmen with a profound respect for the Constitution & the importance of the chain of command

- Promoting an understanding of & demonstrating a commitment to the highest standards of moral & ethical behavior

- Fostering an environment that promotes mutual trust, loyalty & personal accountability in everything we do

- Provide midshipmen with the professional skills necessary to be successful Navy & Marine Corps officers (USNA Superintendent and Various, 1999, p.9)

The following paragraphs will describe the way in which the ODEV and PRODEV Divisions meet these strategic objectives; the USNA Leadership Continuum.

2. Developing Navy and Marine Corps Leaders of Character

The goal of the USNA Leadership Continuum is to produce "leaders of character who are servants of the nation, standard bearers of the naval profession, and warriors" (Athens, et al., 2005a, p.2). The process by which this goal is reached is a character, leadership, and professional education continuum that is "sequenced, integrated and coordinated across the Midshipman experience, that gains synergy through reinforcement and

14

habituation, and that strikes a deliberate and conscious balance between education and training" (Athens, et al., 2005a, p.2).

a. Core Courses in Character and Leadership Education (ODEV)

In a presentation assembled in 2006, USNA Distinguished Military Professor of Character, CAPT Jim Campbell, USN (Ret), describes the USNA Midshipman leadership development experience. The following table illustrates the core ODEV academic courses:

Mandatory Leadership, Ethics and Law/ODEV Academic Courses		
Course Designator	Course Description	Course Credits
NL112	Leadership and Human Behavior	2-0-2
NE203	Ethics and Moral Reasoning for the Naval Leader	3-0-3
NL302	Leadership Theory and Application	2-0-2
NL400	Law for the Junior Officer	2-0-2
NL40X	1st Class Leadership Capstone	2-2-3
* Course credits indicates weekly lecture hours - laboratory hours - credit hours		
Source: After (Campbell, personal communication, March 19, 2006)		

Table 1.   Core LEL/ODEV Academic Courses

Additionally, according to Campbell, Midshipmen are subjected to the following leadership development experiences, which are outside the Naval Leadership and Naval Science curricula:

15

- Saturday Morning Training (SMT)
- First Class Capstone Seminars
- FP130, US Govt. and Constitutional Development
- HH104, American Naval History
- Martial Arts
- Cadre Training
- Intramurals/Varsity Athletics
- Fourth Class Sea Trials
- Honor Remediation/Mentor Training
- Visiting speakers
- Summer Training
- Company Officer time
- Midshipman Action Group (MAG)

(Campbell, personal communication, March 19, 2006, p.2)

These elements are integrated and coordinated throughout the leadership continuum.

b. *Core Courses in Professional Education*

The professional education aspects of the leadership continuum are largely focused on summer training and other experiences outside the classroom. However, there are three mandatory academic courses associated with the PRODEV Division that are taught during Plebe, Third Class, and Second Class years. They are outlined in the following table:

Mandatory Professional Development (PRODEV) Academic Courses		
Course Designator	Course Description	Course Credits
NS100	Fundamentals of Naval Science: "Introduction to the basic concepts of seamanship, ship	3-2-4

	handling, and coastal piloting. Includes at-sea labs on 108' Yard Patrol Craft (YPs)."	
NN204	Navigation and Piloting: "Builds on concepts learned in NS100 and Third Class Summer Cruise. Specifically covers celestial and electronic navigation; basic meteorology; tides and currents; and voyage planning."	2-2-3
NL310	Strategy and Tactics: provides instruction on the basic elements of strategic thought in military operations by Sun Tzu, Jomini, Mahan, and Corbett. Case studies are examined as well as current U.S. National, Joint, and Maritime strategy/doctrine and their applications. The application of basic warfare tactics is accomplished via use of Fleet Command, a commercial tactical gaming program"	1-2-2
* Course credits indicates weekly lecture hours - laboratory hours - credit hours		
Source: After (USNA Academic Dean Website, 2006)		

Table 2.   Core Professional Development Academic Courses

These courses are an integral part of the leadership continuum and are intended to equip Midshipmen with the professional Navy and military knowledge base expected of service academy graduates who will presumably become future

leaders of an organization that only promotes from within. However, because of U.S. Navy and Naval Academy traditions, because roughly twenty-five percent of Midshipmen service select surface warfare, and because of available resources, core professional training is disproportionately weighted towards acquiring maritime skills. Seamanship, shiphandling, navigation and piloting, tides and currents, are all skills that will directly benefit a future Surface Warfare Officer, but will not necessarily be used by Midshipmen who are commissioned into other warfare communities. The following table is a generic illustration of the leadership continuum:

United States Naval Academy Leadership Continuum							
Plebe Year		**Third Class Year**		**Second Class Year**		**First Class Year**	
Plebe Summer	Plebe Year →	Fleet Cruise/ Open Ocean Sail	3/c Year	Protramid/ Yard Patrol	2nd Class Year	Fleet Cruise/ Small Unit Leader- ship	1st Class Year
→ → →	→	→ →	→	→ →	→	→ →	→
Leadership and Behavior (NL112)		Ethics (NE203)		Leadership Theory and Application (NL302)		Law (NL400) and Capstone Course (NL40X)	
Know Yourself: Personality Motivation Human - Behavior		**Moral Reasoning:** Professional - Ethics Use of Force Character Duty		**Know Your People:** Fleet Case - Studies Transformation- al - Leadership Group Behavior		**Know Your Job:** UCMJ Fleet and Operational Focus Warfare/Commun -ity Preparation	
Source: From (Athens, et al., 2006a, p.5)							

Table 3.   USNA Leadership Continuum

The focus of this thesis is NL401, the First Class Midshipman Leadership Capstone Course for Midshipmen who selected Surface Warfare as their warfare community. This course is taught in the spring semester of First Class Year, and is intended to serve as a culmination of previous leadership, character and warfare community-specific development experiences. It is the last academic element of the USNA Leadership Continuum and Midshipman leadership experience.

c.   *Mandatory Summer Training Programs*

In addition to core academic curricula that focus on teaching and training maritime skills, USNA requires all Midshipmen to participate in several summer training programs that lend themselves to acquiring skills that will directly benefit future Surface Warfare Officers. In 2006, LT Peter Weston, composed a brief that outlined summer training required for graduation:

- Class of 2007
  - Gray Hull Cruise
- Classes of 2008-2009
  - Gray Hull Cruise
  - YP cruise or qualification
    OR
  - Sailing cruise or qualification (CSNTS)
  - Small Unit Leadership Experience

(Weston, 2006, p. 3)

Ideally, these requirements would be fulfilled during Third Class summer, by coupling gray hull cruise with sailing or YPs. The following table describes these programs:

Mandatory Summer Training Programs	
Program	Description
CSNTS (Command, Seamanship and Navigation Training Squadron)	"CSNTS sends the sail training craft, Navy 44s, crewed by 3/c Midshipmen and led by 1/c Midshipmen, USNA Faculty, Staff or volunteers, to ports up the east coast for thirteen, two-week long training blocks. CSNTS crews go though extensive sailing, seamanship and navigation training to prepare them for their assignments during the preceding Fall, Winter and Spring" (USNA CSNTS Website, 2006, p.1)
Gray Hull Cruise	Typically conducted during 3/c Summer, with an ideal distribution of 75% of Midshipmen underway on Surface Ships, 20% underway on Submarines, and 5% other.
Yard Patrol Cruise	Yard Patrol (YP) cruise allows Midshipmen to crew 108' YPs. During the cruise YPs operate in coastal waters along the East Coast, as squadrons. Midshipmen will have the opportunity to develop the maritime skills taught in NS100.
Source: After (Weston, 2006, p. 6)	

Table 4.   Mandatory Summer Training Programs

d. *Professional Education Opportunities for Future Surface Warfare Officers*

As previously stated, USNA Professional Development Division concentrates its focus on teaching and training Midshipmen in maritime skills. This is evidenced

by the fact that The Department of Seamanship and Navigation (SEANAV) is the only academic training department at USNA. Additionally, USNA continues to maintain resources and programs such as a fleet of Yard Patrol Craft, a robust sailing program, and ship driving simulators that all lend themselves to teaching and training Surface Warfare-centric skills. In addition to these programs, activities such as YP squadron and Surface Navy Association provide voluntary opportunities for aspiring Surface Warfare Officers to build upon their maritime skills. Experiences in these curricula, education and training programs, and extra-curricular activities are intended to be integrated throughout the Leadership Continuum, culminating in the USNA Surface Warfare Officer Leadership Capstone course.

D. USNA LEADERSHIP CAPSTONE COURSE BACKGROUND AND CURRENT STATUS

1. Practicum, NS40X (1995–2004)

Prior to 1995 the First Class Leadership Capstone, or practicum as it was called prior to 2005, was not a graduation requirement. Although similar courses were offered as early as the 1960s, they were offered to Midshipmen as elective courses. The graduating class of 1995 was the first to be required to take the course. The course was initially implemented as a response to the need to give Midshipmen the tools required to be successful at their first professional school. Responsibility for designing the curriculum and teaching the course fell to the Professional Development (PRODEV) Division (Gannon, 2000). In his 2000 thesis, Richard Gannon stated that the primary objective of the course was:

> To provide Midshipmen with a professional background that will prepare them for the service community they are about to enter, whether that be SWOS, nuclear power school, flight training, or TBS (Gannon, 2000, p.144).

According to Gannon, the secondary objectives of the course were:

> 1. To provide Midshipmen with a broader understanding of the Navy and Marine Corps, their components and how they work together. This understanding will increase their ability to articulate what the Navy and Marine Corps are about and will also increase their understanding of the challenges and opportunities that will become apparent to them as newly commissioned officers.
>
> 2. To provide Midshipmen with a specific depth of understanding expected of a graduate of a service academy regarding joint operations, information technology, and military sociology (Gannon, 2000, p.155)

To accomplish these objectives, active duty Naval Academy faculty and staff pooled their professional knowledge to generate course material, and instructors taught primarily from their Fleet experience. No institution-directed, collective changes were made to the NS40X curriculum until 2005 (Gannon, 2000).

2. Capstone (2005-Present)

Resulting from the 2005 Academic Program Review, the academic organization of the Naval Academy was restructured. Professional Development Division was split into PRODEV and ODEV. As a result of the restructuring, it was determined that responsibility for the course would fall under Officer Development Division. The course designation was changed from NS40X to NL40X. The intent

was that it be transitioned from a primarily training course to one with a balance of leadership education and practical training. It was to be developed into a true leadership capstone. The stated purpose and vision of the course is:

> The purpose of the Naval Leadership CAPSTONE course (NL 401-406) is to serve as the culminating leadership experience for 1/C MIDN in the area of leadership, character, and warfare community-specific development. NL 40X augments the classroom environment with intensive laboratories designed to provide knowledge, skills, and abilities that will serve MIDN as they transition to service as commissioned officers (Thomas, 2005, p. 1).

Members of the graduating class of 2005 were the first to take the course intended to be a leadership capstone. However, little analysis was conducted regarding the needs of the course or the steps required for transitioning from a practicum to a true leadership capstone. Active duty military personnel remained as instructors. Warfare community representatives conducted ad hoc reviews of their curricula and course material, yet there was still no collective guidance for teaching the course. The reality is that NL40X remains primarily a practical training course, taught from the perspectives of Junior Officers who were recently in the Fleet. In response to the proposed changes to the Leadership Continuum and their curricula, Officer Development Division's Distinguished Military Professors (DMP) have conducted recent studies and explored curriculum options that are relevant to this research. The results of the studies have been briefed to senior USNA administrators, but have not been incorporated into the

curricula. These projects are the Officer Development System DMP Integration Project and a ODEV/PRODEV review of core course options.

3. Officer Development System DMP Integration Project

From March to September 2005, ODEV Division DMPs conducted a project they referred to as the DMP integration project. The purpose of the project was:

- To integrate the Character, Ethics and Leadership Programs

- To condense and simplify the ODS attribute list and identify those attributes most critical for success as a Junior Officer

- To determine which (ODS) attributes are being successfully instilled in our graduates

- To determine how to "close the gap" between "present" and "desired"

- Make specific recommendations on the three programs (Athens, et al., 2005b, p.3)

The group of professors took the list of thirty-one graduate attributes and their subordinating elements identified by the 2004-2005 Officer Development System Project and attempted to determine how and when each attribute should be taught, and how to assess USNA's ability to teach them. Working with five USNA Class of 2005 graduates, the researchers graded the Academy's effectiveness of teaching each attribute and its elements. The research identified twenty-three elements that need greater attention and should be made a priority in the ODEV/PRODEV curricula, and the Leadership Continuum. According to those conducting the study, ten of the twenty-three elements should be taught or emphasized in NL40X,

thus identifying the 1/C Capstone Course as a primary venue for revising, refining, and refreshing the Leadership Continuum (Athens, et al., 2005b).

4. PRODEV/ODEV DMP/PMP Core Review Options

The second recent project relevant to the Academic Program review, ODEV/PRODEV curriculum restructuring, and NL40X is a brief to the Commandant of Midshipman that was composed by members of the ODEV and PRODEV Divisions. Members of these divisions were tasked with determining options for restructuring the ODEV/PRODEV core requirements. Within a limit of eighteen credit hours, the two divisions sought to determine which PRODEV/ODEV courses should be mandatory (core) during a Midshipman's eight semesters aboard USNA, and how to allocate credit hours between the two divisions and among their respective courses.

A central component of the ODEV/PRODEV review of core courses was the assumption that the First Class Leadership Capstone courses will be divided between the two divisions, such that a two-hour laboratory period per week, and one course credit is allocated for PRODEV, and two lecture hours per week and two course credits are allocated for ODEV. The PRODEV Practicum course would be designed to "prepare Midshipmen for the Fleet," while the ODEV Leadership Capstone course would "culminate the USNA leadership experience" (Athens, et al., 2005b, p.4). Although changes to the leadership continuum would occur if any of the numerous options were adopted, this assumption would be the only direct impact to NL401. To date, a final decision on which option to pursue has not been made.

25

E.   NL401, USNA SURFACE WARFARE LEADERSHIP CAPSTONE

The USNA Surface Warfare Leadership Capstone (NL401) is one of the most dynamic courses taught at USNA, and in order for USNA to remain the "premier institution for developing leaders of the Navy," its potential must be maximized (Rempt, 2005c, p.5). Due to the changing needs of the Fleet, the curriculum must be reviewed on a nearly continuous basis. The Capstone is considered by many to be a "catch-all" for Surface Warfare and leadership topics not covered in the Leadership Continuum or those not covered in enough detail. It is also a forum for soon-to-be Ensigns to ask questions to Surface Warfare Officers with Fleet experience. Some individuals involved with the course see this as the most beneficial aspect of the course, because in less than six months Midshipmen in the course will be required to transition from life on the Yard, leading other Midshipmen, to life aboard ship leading a division of sailors. The following quotation is the course description provided in the USNA course catalog:

> A course to provide information on the duties and responsibilities required of a junior officer in the surface community. Instruction includes operational procedures and practical applications of leadership and management principles tailored to the surface force. Lab includes training in shiphandling and bridge watchstanding skills through the use of YPs and simulation software (USNA Academic Dean Website, 2006, p. 1, paragraph 6).

The next paragraph will elaborate on the current NL401 curriculum, excluding the laboratory.

1. NL401 Curriculum

NL401 is a three-credit course with four contact hours per week. Two, one-hour blocks per week are allotted for lecture, accompanied by one day per week laboratory that is two hours in length. The required topics are "officership, character, leadership, and surface warfare specific training/education" (Thomas, 2005, p.1). Desired topics are "ethics, the contemporary global environment, the future of the Surface Warfare Community, and other warfare communities" (p.1). The current course syllabus was designed by Dr. Joseph Thomas, Class of 1971 Distinguished Military Professor of Leadership, and the sponsor of this research. He divided the course into two parts, the first titled "Perspectives on Officership," which focused on the officership, character and leadership portions of the course, while the second was Surface Warfare Community-specific. In part one, the first theme of the course is "Foundations of Officership." This section of the course covers nine lessons, each corresponding to a chapter in The Armed Forces Officer. The second theme in Part One is Joint Officership (three lessons), and the third is Naval Officership (three lessons). The warfare community-specific lessons are designed by a course coordinator from that respective community (Thomas, 2005).

According to LT Kelly Welsh, NL401 course coordinator, the classroom segment of the course uses "portions of the Division Officer's Guide, Naval Officer Guide, and Watch Officer guide as text" (Welsh, personal communication, November 16, 2005). To supplement these texts is a composition of material printed into text in 2005. The

27

supplemental text covers eight lessons that are specific to Surface Warfare and managing a division aboard a ship, to include the following:

- Maneuvering Board Example [Closest Point of Approach (CPA)]

- Maneuvering Board Example (course and speed)

- Maneuvering Board Example (changing station)

- Maneuvering Board Example (opening CPA)

- NTP-3 GENADMIN Format

- Enlisted Distribution Verification Report (EDVR) Breakdown

- EDVR Sections

- Pay Tables

  (Welsh, personal communication, November 16, 2005)

2.   Potential NL401 Strengths and Weaknesses

In his role as overall NL40X coordinator, Dr. Joseph Thomas, solicited input from various NL40X stakeholders and compiled lists of strengths and weaknesses of the course. These strengths and weaknesses were published in his 2005 course overview/syllabus. The following strengths were identified:

- NL 40X represents an opportunity to cover ethics, leadership, and character concepts not covered in previous courses.

- NL 40X represents an opportunity to cover warfare specific information to prepare MIDN for service in the fleet or operating forces of the Marine Corps.

- NL 40X synthesizes various ethics, leadership, and character concepts in a formal CAPSTONE conclusion to LEL core courses.

28

- NL 40X provides MIDN an opportunity to demonstrate a thorough understanding of ethics, leadership, and character concepts covered in previous related courses.

- NL 40X is, perhaps, the most "practical" of courses MIDN will take while at the Academy. It is comprised of lessons tailored to the needs of the Navy and Marine Corps.

The following were seen as weaknesses:

- There are too many "culminating" topics than can reasonably be covered in a single semester; choices must be made, subjectivity is unavoidable.

- Quality of instruction varies widely because of the use of adjunct instructors.

- Various warfare communities have dissimilar visions for balancing education and training.

- Various individuals have dissimilar visions for balancing education and training.

- Professional core competencies for basic (entry level) officers in the various communities vary greatly.

- The shift from NS 40X to NL 40X represents a change in focus and priority. Change is generally accompanied by unintended consequences.

(Thomas, 2005, p. 1)

The goal of this research is to determine how NL401 should be structured so that the potential of the course is maximized and an appropriate balance is struck between the training and educational needs of SWO selected First Class Midshipmen; the strengths must be capitalized and the weaknesses eliminated or minimized. In order to accomplish this goal, and meet the needs of the Fleet, the Division Officer at Sea Program must be taken into consideration.

F. DIVISION OFFICER AT SEA PROGRAM (DOSP)

1. History and Background of DOSP

Surface Warfare Officer's School Command was commissioned in 1970, and was responsible for initial accession training for all Surface Warfare Officers for over 30 years. However, in 2001 the Surface Warfare community began to explore alternative training methods for their junior officers (JOs). A survey of over 2,000 JOs was conducted, and "only 24% of those surveyed felt that the Surface Warfare Officer School Command (SWOSCOLCOM) prepared them, or very well prepared them for their first at-sea division officer tour" (Gavino, 2002, p.1). Additionally, SWOSCOLCOM conducted a survey of year group (YG) 1998 Lieutenants, and determined that after qualifying as a Surface Warfare Officer, individuals remain at their initial sea tour for an average of only seven additional months. The conclusion was that this severely restricted the amount of time allowed for newly qualified SWOs to hone their watch-standing skills, and to take advantage of leadership opportunities aboard their first ship (Gavino, 2002, p.3).

As a result of these surveys, and in an effort to reduce costs associated with the additional Permanent Change of Station (PCS) move to Newport, Senior SWO leadership determined that Junior Officers and the Surface Navy would benefit from Ensigns reporting to their first at-sea assignment immediately following commissioning. Beginning in January, 2003, instead of attending the four-month SWOS Division Officer's Course, Ensigns have been expected to complete a set of interactive, computer-based, course modules onboard their ship, qualify as an officer-

of-the-deck, and then report to SWOS for a three-week Division Officer's Course, which is meant to validate the computer-based training (CBT) (Vaas, 2004).

Therefore, Surface Warfare became the only warfare community in today's Navy that does not have a "follow-on" school for its Ensigns. The burden of preparing Ensigns for the first day aboard their ships, and their first impressions lies solely with their commissioning sources.

a.   SWOS Division Officer Course Curriculum

Prior to the implementation of DOSP, Ensigns were commissioned and reported directly to SWOSCOLCOM, Newport, RI for the Division Officers Course. This course was intended to prepare them for service in the Fleet. During their time in Newport "students learned Navigation, Administration, Weapons Systems, Damage Control, Engineering, and Basic Leadership" (Vaas, 2004, p.2). The SWOSDOC curriculum consisted of "eleven weeks of Operation and Combat Systems fundamentals (PHASE I), six weeks of platform specific engineering training (PHASE II), and three to six weeks of billet specialty training (BST) (Makee, 1999, p.16). After completing the Division Officers Course, Ensigns would either undergo additional training for specific billet or ship-types or report to their first command.

b.   DOSP Modules/DOSP Curriculum

Under the Division Officer at Sea Program, all Surface Warfare selected Ensigns report directly from their commissioning source to their first at-sea command where they will begin their training and qualification track.

The following is an illustration of the typical Surface Warfare Officer training and qualification pipeline:

Figure 1.   Current SWO Training and Qualification Pipeline
From (LaBarbera, 2005, p.2)

Ensigns report aboard their first ship and are allotted six to fifteen months to complete DOSP CBT modules and achieve their OOD qualification. Once these requirements are met, they report to SWOSCOLCOM for the three-week Division Officer Course, return to their ship, and prepare for their Surface Warfare Officer Qualification board. Once qualified, they remain onboard to complete their first twenty-seven month division officer tour (LaBarbera, 2005, p.2).

The computer based training (CBT) program is divided into modules designed to replace the classroom training provided during the five-month Division Officer Course. These modules are downloadable CDs that cover administration; division officer fundamentals; navigation, seamanship, and shiphandling; combat systems/maritime

warfare; and engineering. The following is SWOSCOLCOM's description of the ideal implementation of the program:

> The training starts with "book-type" learning, where the trainee reads the theory or fundamentals about the topic. The Curriculum then sends the trainee away from the computer to accomplish practicums, where the trainee finds out how the given topics relates to his or her particular ship, and Practical Problems, which are scenario-type problems to further develop the trainee's understanding. Lastly are Case Studies, where trainees apply what they've learned and discovered to actual events (SWOS Division Officer Training Overview, 2006, p.1)

Once these modules have been completed, prospective SWOs report to SWOSCOLCOM for the Division Officer Course.

The mission of SWOSDOC Division Officer Training Course is to:

> Prepare OOD Underway qualified officers for SWO Qualification by immersing them in a collaborative, task based environment which will broaden each officer's professional knowledge base and reinforce fundamental principles and practices in accordance with existing instructions and policies (SWOSDOC Homepage, 2006, p.1).

The Division Officer Course is considered a "leveling" course, intended to give DIVOs and opportunity to share their experiences and knowledge. The course covers all aspects of Surface Warfare including technical knowledge, war fighting knowledge, shiphandling simulators and leadership.

2. Implications for Commissioning Sources and NL401

The implementation of the DOSP has obvious direct implications for commissioning sources, including the

United States Naval Academy. The most obvious is that future Surface Warfare Officers are no longer afforded dedicated classroom time after commissioning to learn their profession. Prior to reporting aboard their first ship, the responsibility for preparing an Ensign to lead a Division and perform their watchstanding and professional duties lies solely with their commissioning source. Also, training with computer based training modules is completely up to the individual and his or her command. Another implication is that Ensigns must transition from being civilians or college and Service Academy students, to being a Division Officer in a span of days, not months. The personal responsibilities and personal management skills obtained at SWOSDOC must be acquired somewhere else, either at the commissioning source or while in the Fleet. Lastly, personal networking opportunities provided at SWOSDOC are no longer available. Ensigns must rely on personal associations and friendships acquired in college or prior to commissioning to share leadership and professional experiences.

Thus, the implications for NL401 are also acute. The course is the only professional training course at the Naval Academy, and attempting to replace the material and experiences covered in five months at SWOSDOC with a one-semester course curriculum is neither feasible nor useful. The requirements of the course as they relate to satisfying USNA's mission and vision necessitate a highly efficient course curriculum that focuses on the needs of USNA and the Fleet. To remain as the nation's premier commissioning source for Surface Warfare Officers, NL401 must be structured such that its potential is maximized.

G.   CHAPTER SUMMARY

During the 1998 strategic planning process, USNA stakeholders validated the institution's mission, created a statement of strategic vision, and developed strategies for achieving its mission and vision.   In 2005, USNA Superintendent, Vice Admiral Rodney P. Rempt, recast the 1998 Strategic Plan.   Additionally, he ordered an institution-wide academic program review intended to ensure USNA was meeting its mission and vision by effectively and efficiently graduating Officers who meet the requirements of the Navy and Marine Corps.   One element of this review involves exploring curriculum options related to the "core" academic and professional courses taught at the Naval Academy.   One of these courses is NL401, the Surface Warfare Officer Leadership Capstone.   These options in the context of changes resulting from the creation of Officer Development Division and the implementation of the Division Officer at Sea Program in 2003, make achieving the full potential of NL401, as both a culminating leadership experience and practical training, critical to satisfying the mission and vision of the Naval Academy. The following chapter will explore published literature that relates to higher education practices, capstone courses, training and education, and conducting needs assessments.

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III. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to examine literature that will aid in identifying potential strengths and weaknesses of NL401, and the most effective and efficient way to assess the needs of the course. First, this chapter reviews published literature and documents concerning topics related to higher education, and education and training in the military. These topics include education versus training and capstone courses in undergraduate education. Next, literature will be reviewed that explores proven methods used for conducting needs assessments and qualitative research. Critical terminology will be adapted from, and defined using this literature. Furthermore, parts of this literature will provide an accepted foundation for this research methodology, interview design, and interpretation of results.

B. TRAINING VERSUS EDUCATION

Balancing the goals of ODEV and PRODEV Divisions is a central tenet to determining how NL40X and NL401 should be structured. The goals of ODEV Division are education oriented, while the goals of PRODEV are training oriented. Therefore, members of both divisions agreed on a vision statement for the course that touched on both training and education, but did not explicitly define these terms. They state that the course is to serve as a culminating leadership, character, and warfare community-specific experience that will augment classroom instruction with laboratories. In the case of NL401, these laboratories are

YPs and shiphandling simulators, intended to provide a pure training experience. The following paragraph elaborates on definitions of education and training.

The United States Marine Corps definitions of training and education are adopted for the purposes of this research, and used in the research design. In his 1991 Marine Corps Order (MCO) 1553.1B, the 29th Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Al Gray outlined his thoughts on the Marine Corps Training and Education System. The following statement made by General Gray encapsulates the different, but necessarily complimentary goals of military training and education, and the value of properly balancing the two:

> Training and education are important but different tools to be used in the development of an effective fighting force. Each complements the other and they are tightly interwoven at every level of professional development (Gray, 1991, p.1).

The following definitions of education and training are also provided in MCO 1553.1B, and are suitable for use in the context of NL401:

> Education is the process of moral and mental development; the drawing out of students to initiate the learning process and bring their own interpretations and energies to bear, the product of which is a creative mind (Gray, 1991, p.1).

Training is defined as:

> the conduct of instruction, discipline, or drill; the building in of information and procedures; and the progressive repetition of tasks, the product of which is skill development and proficiency (Gray, 1991, p.1).

Using education to produce creative minds through the process of moral and mental development, and training to

produce skill development and proficiency is fundamentally congruent with the NL401 vision. However, for this thesis, developing creative minds and skill proficiency, will be replaced by analogous, more contemporary terms. These terms are knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes (KSAAs) and competencies, which will be defined further in this chapter. Nonetheless, capturing these definitions of education and training will provide a foundation for exploring the needs of NL401, and for ensuring both the educational and training goals of the course are met.

C.   CAPSTONE COURSES

The change of the NL401 vision from practicum to leadership capstone is a significant shift in philosophy that requires sound research and needs analysis to be structured and implemented effectively and efficiently. To determine how NL401 should be structured the advantages and disadvantages of various capstone course theories and structures must be explored. The following paragraphs review literature pertaining to capstone courses in various college curricula.

1.   Definition of Capstone

According to Fairchild and Taylor (2000), as cited in Sargent, Pennington, and Sitton (2003), a capstone course is, "a planned learning experience requiring students to synthesize previously learned subject matter content, and to integrate new information into their knowledge base for solving simulated real world problems" (Sargent, Pennington, and Sitton, 2003, p.2). Fairchild and Taylor (2000) state "a capstone course should focus on integration of knowledge, facilitate meaningful closure, and provide

students with a contextual framework connecting theory and application based on their academic experiences and the connection among the disciplines, and the role of their profession in the outside world" (Sargent, et al., 2003, p.2). These definitions of capstone validate the NL40X vision as expressed in the Leadership Continuum, and provide grounds for applying capstone courses to academic curricula at USNA. NL40X, as described by ODEV/PRODEV Divisions, seems to be the ideal venue for providing Midshipmen with a contextual framework for integrating leadership theory and application, and other leadership education and training experiences. However, two schools of thought exist regarding philosophies for implementation.

2.   Capstone Theory

At the heart of implementing a capstone course, lie two distinct, opposed, and legitimate philosophies. Robert Heinemann articulates the dilemma in his 1997 paper titled The Senior Capstone: Dome or Spire?. According to Heinemann, capstone courses are most often intended to fulfill "a need for students to pull together all the ideas presented in different courses and construct some sort of integrated, meaningful whole" (Heinemann, 1997, p.3). One goal of this process is to aid students in their pursuit of grasping a chosen discipline, and to help them to gain a sense of corporate identity (Heinemann, 1997). However, he also notes that the end of the college experience does not signify an end to intellectual growth. College graduates must be equipped with KSAAs that will prepare them to use their college experience as a jumping-off point for exploring new arenas. Thus, the question becomes should a capstone be designed to provide closure (symbolized by a

dome) or further exploration (symbolized by a spire). Heinemann asks the following questions that are relevant to designing NL401:

1. Can a capstone provide both closure and further exploration?
2. Can both be accomplished in the time allotted?
3. Since the goals seem to move in opposite directions, is one cancelled out by including the other?
4. If we are forced to chose between the two, which should be emphasized?

(Cited: Heinemann, 1997, p.1)

Answers to these questions will be explored throughout this research and will serve as guidelines for formulating recommendations regarding the NL401 course structure.

a.   The Case For and Against the Dome

The case for the dome is obvious and easily made. According to Heinemann, the first benefit of a capstone that provides closure is "practical necessity." Students in any discipline, including leadership, undergo varying instruction and experiences, and synthesize material in different ways. A senior capstone is arguably the most effective way to level the playing field. The second benefit of a dome is "market necessity." "Students themselves desire and need a sense of 'what we have learned'" (Heinemann, 1997, p.7). The third benefit is "semantic necessity." Heinemann states that "only integrated knowledge is meaningful," and cites a 1991 study performed by the Association of American Colleges, that concluded that "the end of the major ought to be a time for integrating knowledge, concepts, and capacities from different parts of student's learning experiences" (p.7).

The last benefit is "pragmatic necessity," which is founded on the belief that "only integrated knowledge is useful" (p.8). By the end of their major, or leadership pipeline, students should be able to apply the knowledge and concepts that they learned to situations that are unfamiliar to them.

Heinemann identifies three possible problems to a capstone that provides closure. The first arises when the course focuses on reviewing previous material at the expense of integrating the material. He states, "When this occurs we are left with a cheap rehash of content from other courses without an overall synthesis" (p.8). The second problem is the opposite of the first. This occurs when the emphasis is placed in synthesis at the expense of reviewing prior course material. In this case, the "vision becomes so enlarged that it completely betrays the discipline" (p.10). The third problem is the case-study syndrome, in which teachers and students become so focused on the minutiae of a problem that they find themselves exploring material that is beyond their area of expertise (p. 10).

b. The Case For and Against the Spire

The case for the spire is not as obvious and easily made as that for the dome. Heinemann states that the first advantage of a capstone that is designed to promote further exploration is "preparation for the real world of work." In this capacity, a capstone course could ensure realistic expectations for what their first job will be like. The second benefit is preparing students for a rapidly changing workplace. Although Heinemann makes this

claim in the context of communication studies, it can easily be substantiated in other contexts, including modern Navy operations. USNA students must be prepared to enter their profession as agents of the state, who operate in rapidly changing geo-political environments. Furthermore, they must be prepared to be faced with unprecedented technological challenges and innovations, and organizational, procedural, and ideological change. Heinemann sums this point up by stating "how can we ignore these issues that make our texts and courses obsolete, sometimes before graduation" (p.11). The third and last benefit of a spire is "preparation for citizenship." Although the Naval Academy spends four years preparing its students for citizenship, the capstone remains a viable venue for ensuring students meet the moral and ethical standards expected of a USNA graduate serving in the Navy or Marine Corps.

Heinemann observes three problems involved with designing and implementing a spire. The first occurs when instructors attempt to cover too much new material, or too many different things. He notes that often, professors attempt to cover "everything important that was left out of the major or the core of the major" (p.16). He states that this philosophy is unworkable because there within any course of study more is left out than is included. The second problem is that if the capstone overemphasizes practical material, the course becomes "petty and superficial" (p. 16). He believes that even personally important subject matter should be left out of the course. The third problem with the spire occurs when the boundaries

of the discipline are breached: "Getting off the subject is easier in the senior capstone course than any other course" (p.17).

c. *How to Make Capstone Work*

According to Heinemann, most professional education literature indicates that a combination of closure and future exploration is desirable and achievable in capstone courses. He suggests that small colleges lean towards focusing on providing closure for its majors, but provides the following five practical steps that ease integrating the two philosophies:

- The major should have a complimentary entry course that prepares students for the entire major.

- Students should be required to retain all course material that pertains to their major.

- Students should be required to take a core survey course that covers humanistic and critical approaches to the discipline

- Capstone teachers must have access to the syllabi of all course in the major

- All students should be required to participate in an internship.

(Cited: p.18,19)

Many of these steps are met or exceeded in the USNA leadership continuum, and others can easily be implemented.

The advantages and disadvantages of the dome and spire capstone philosophies will provide the theoretical framework to determine how NL401 should be structured. This literature also indicates that USNA's leadership continuum sets the stage for a successful senior leadership capstone course; the foundation is already in place. The

next step in this research is to identify the needs of the course. What material must, should, and could be covered so that the course potential is maximized and the goals of the U.S. Navy, United States Naval Academy, faculty, staff, and Midshipmen are met? This research will use an education and training needs assessment to answer these questions.

D.   NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

Several models exist for developing a plan for educating and training those within an organization. The most commonly accepted method is referred to as a needs assessment. The needs assessment is the foundation on which an education and training system should be based (Newman, 2002). NL401 is one element of an existing learning system designed to prepare Midshipmen to be Surface Warfare Officers, however no formal exploration into the needs of the course has been conducted. This research will apply one proven needs assessment method to explore how the course should be structured to maximize its potential, meet training and educational goals, and consequently produce premier Surface Warfare Division Officers.

Brinkerhoff and Gill (1994), as cited in Gupta (1999), describe a needs assessment as "a process for identifying the knowledge and skills necessary for achieving organizational goals" (Gupta, 1999, p.4). Needs assessments can also be described as both a process for identifying differences between desired and actual performance, and a method for identifying performance needs (Gupta, 1999). This research will attempt to accomplish both of these

objectives by qualitatively exploring desired and actual performance of recent USNA graduates who are in the Surface Fleet, and by attempting to identify present and future needs of the course. Two proven methods of conducting needs assessments are training and educational needs assessments. Since NL401 must be structured to both educate and train Midshipmen in their transition to the fleet, aspects of each method will be used for this research.

1.   Training Needs Assessment

As cited in Gupta (1999), Allison Rossett (1987) states that "a gap between an optimal and actual situation results in discrepancies in performance" (Gupta, 1999, p.7). Rossett believes that once there is the perception of a gap, conducting a training needs assessment is an effective and efficient way to close it. Gupta further states that this type of needs assessment is the most appropriate method for "developing a training agenda, developing a specific training program (course/module), and developing a training curriculum" (Gupta, 1999, p.114). According to Rossett's model, five types of information are collected during a training needs assessment:

- Optimal performance or knowledge.
  How performance should be.
- Actual or current performance or knowledge. How performance is.
- Feelings of trainees and significant others.
  How people feel about a problem.
- Causes of the problem from many perspectives.
  Reasons for problems.

- Solutions to the problem from many perspectives.
  Ways to solve a problem.

<div align="right">(Gupta, 1999, p.7)</div>

This information is then processed and used to identify the KSAAs people need to be successful at their jobs, and the interventions that can achieve the desired state (Gupta, 1999, p.115).

2.   Educational Needs Assessment

The second type of needs assessment that will be used for this research is an educational needs assessment. According to W. James Popham, an "educational needs assessment is a technique for identifying those educational objectives that most need to be accomplished in a given instructional situation" (Popham, 1971-1972, p.22).   In Popham's model, an educational need is defined as the difference between a desired learner outcome and the learner's current status. Once these needs are identified, they are then prioritized according to what stakeholders believe are most important.   The resulting curriculum is thereby designed to satisfy the most pressing needs of the students.   Popham also notes that this needs assessment model must be attentive to educational outcomes including, but not limited to those traditionally seen as intellectual accomplishments.   "All three domains of learner behavior; that is, the affective, the cognitive, and the psychomotor," domains must be considered, where affective needs are "attitudinal, valuing or emotional," cognitive needs refer to intellectual outcomes, and psychomotor needs refer to the learner's physical and motor skills (p.23). Popham's model presumes that the integration of

instructional objectives and related criterion measures with the judgments of those involved in designing, implementing, and teaching the curriculum will increase the quality of instruction by identifying the "educational objectives we really ought to be pursuing" (p.31).

For the purposes of this research, Rossett's training needs assessment model will be used, but adapted and modified to include the affective, cognitive, and psychomotor domains of learner behavior referenced in Popham's educational needs assessment model. This method will be used in this research to identify both the educational and training needs of NL401, and will hereon be referred to as simply a training needs assessment.

According to Gupta (1999), there are several situations in which a training needs assessment should be used. These situations include, "when a new system or technology must be implemented, when existing training programs must be revised or updated, and when new job responsibilities must be assumed by people" (Gupta, 1999, p.115). The proposed changes to ODEV/PRODEV curricula, USNA core curriculum review, transitioning Midshipmen from USNA to the Fleet, and the implementation of the Division Officer at Sea Program all provide a context in which a training needs assessment is most useful. The precise model and methodology used in conducting this needs assessment of NL401 will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four, Methodology.

E. KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ABILITIES, ATTITUDES AND COMPETENCIES

To fulfill the mission and vision of the Naval Academy and meet the requirements of the Navy and Marine Corps, the

USNA academic, professional, and athletic programs must instill knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes, and competencies in its graduates that will serve Midshipmen as they transition to service in the Fleet (Thomas, 2005, p.1). Defining and identifying these requirements are a primary step in determining the needs of NL401. The following paragraphs review literature related to these terms, which will aid in adapting definitions of each that are appropriate to this research and NL401.

1. Knowledge, Skills, Abilities, and Attitudes (KSAAs)

Several similar definitions of KSAAs exist among academic literature. Muchinsky, as cited in Newman (2002), refers to knowledge as "the body of information that enables adequate job performance; skill refers to operational abilities, often in terms of psychomotor abilities, and ability refers to those cognitive capabilities required by a job" Muchinsky does not address attitudes in his model. (Newman, 2002, p.14). The accepted Department of Defense (DoD) definitions of these terms are outlined in the Joint Competencies Leader Development Framework, and are presented in the following table:

United States Joint Forces Command Definitions of Knowledge, Skills, Abilities, and Attitudes	
Knowledge:	Describes a body of information, usually of a factual or procedural nature, applied directly to the performance of a functional task.
Skill:	The ability to perform a certain physical or

	mental task. Describes a present, observable competence to perform a learned act (could be psychomotor, motor, and/or cognitive)
Ability:	Describes a general, more enduring trait or capability an individual possesses at the time when he/she begins to perform a task.
Attitude:	Describes an internal state that influences an individual's choices or decisions to at in a certain way under particular circumstances.
Cited: After (Newlon, 2004, p. 21)	

Table 5.   USJFCOM KSAA Definitions

Thus, Muchinsky's definitions of these terms are compatible with those published by DoD. For the purposes of this research, Muchinsky's definitions will be used, along with DoD's definition of attitude.

This research seeks to identify KSAAs required of Junior Surface Warfare Officers, structure the NL401 curriculum accordingly, and meet USNA's vision of producing Junior Officers who are better equipped for service in the Surface Fleet than their peers. However, it is possible to teach these KSAAs throughout the leadership pipeline, commission Ensigns and Second Lieutenants who possess them, and still fail to meet the vision. To maximize the potential of the leadership pipeline and NL401, and achieve USNA's vision, we must identify groups of KSAAs that correlate to superior performance. The following paragraphs review literature that defines core competencies, explores the relationship between KSAAs and

core competencies, and provides core competency models, which will be integrated and used in research design and analysis.

2.   Competencies

In her 2002 thesis titled <u>Core Competency Needs Analysis for U.S. Naval Reserve Training and Administration of Reserve (TAR) Officers</u>, Carol Newman notes that in most training literature the terms Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs); and competencies are synonymous. However, she states that some literature identifies core competencies as KSAs that separate high performance from mediocrity. Parry (1998) uses the terms skills and abilities interchangeably, and expands of these two definitions by stating that a competency is a "cluster of related knowledge, attitudes and skills that affects a major part of one's job; that correlates with performance on the job; that can be measured against well-accepted standards; and that can be improved via training and development" (Parry, 1998, p.60). He goes on to describe competencies as "generic" and "universal," and skills as very specific and used only in certain situations. He states that competencies for managers and leaders can be categorized into four groups that are outlined in the following table:

Scott R. Parry's Four Competency Groups	
Administrative	- Time management and prioritizing - Setting goals and standards - Planning and scheduling work
Communication	- Listening and organizing - Giving clear information - Getting unbiased information
Supervisory	- Training, coaching, and delegating - Appraising people and performance - Disciplining and counseling
Cognitive	- Identifying and solving problems - Making Decisions, weighing risks - Thinking clearly and analytically
Source: After (Parry, 1998, p.62)	

Table 6.   Four Competency Groups

Parry's definition of competencies will be adopted and used in this research. These four core competency groups are congruent with the Center for Naval Leadership's (CNL) Competency Model, which identifies five core competencies for Naval Leaders. CNL's five core competencies are, "accomplish the mission, leading people, leading change, working with people, and resource stewardship" (Center for Naval Leadership Competency Model, 2003). Thus, Parry's four core competency groups and their subordinate competencies are used in designing interview and focus group formats for this research. Components of these groups will be prioritized according to the perceived

importance of the NL401 stakeholders, which will help identify educational and training needs of NL401, and how the course should be structured.

To achieve its vision of remaining the premier commissioning source for Surface Warfare Officers, USNA must graduate officers who possess clusters of KSAs (competencies) that correlate to high performance during their first Division Officer tours. NL401 is an appropriate venue for ensuring this objective is met, and assessing the needs of the course is critical to the Naval Academy's success.

F.   CHAPTER SUMMARY

The purpose of this chapter was to review published literature that will provide a logical and effective framework for exploring the needs of NL401, and consequently how the course should be structured. First, relevant, accepted definitions of training and education were presented. These concise definitions provide a basis for designing interview and focus group questions that does not confuse the two terms. Second, literature pertaining to college-level capstone courses and theory were presented. This literature provides a framework for exploring how to effectively and efficiently implement NL401, and problems that may be encountered with capstone courses. It also provides guidance for interpreting results and questions that will aid in making recommendations for course structure. Next, literature relating to educational and training needs assessments was presented, and a training needs assessment model was adapted and modified to accommodate the educational needs

of NL401. This literature provides a foundation for the research methods that will be implemented for use in this needs assessment. Finally, critical terms associated with needs assessments were defined, and a model consisting of four core leadership and management competency groups was adopted. This model will be used in research design, interpretation of results, and in making recommendations for the NL401 course structure. The following chapter will expand on several of these concepts as they relate to the methodology employed in this thesis.

IV. METHODOLOGY

A. CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a thorough discussion of the methodology used in the collection and analysis of data used in this thesis. First, a general discussion regarding qualitative research will be provided. Next, the training needs assessment model that was adopted from previously discussed literature, and used in this research, will be discussed in detail. Then a description of the study participants will be provided. Finally, methods for collecting and analyzing data will be presented.

B. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

This researcher has chosen to examine qualitative data to explore the training and educational needs of NL401, and how this capstone course should be structured. According to Babbie, as cited in Newman (2002), "quantitative research, such as conducting a survey, is very appropriate when the information sought can be transformed into a standard, somewhat inflexible, structured questionnaire, which can be repeatedly administered to obtain quantitative data, such as frequencies and means" (Newman, C., 2002, p.15). The advantages of quantitative data are that large survey groups can be easily reached at a low cost, and the data can usually be processed to produce concise, easily understood results. However, quantitative research may not be appropriate, when the researcher does not have a preconceived idea of what answers to each survey question may look like. "If the potential answers have not yet been

determined, that is, if a model of the phenomenon under study has not yet been developed, then qualitative research can be an appropriate method of gathering data to build such a model" (p.15). Although results from qualitative research cannot be easily reduced to numbers, data gathered is valid and rich in content.

In the case of NL401, a comprehensive research project that includes inputs from all stakeholders has not yet been performed. Therefore, no model currently exists for what the course should really be teaching, or how the course should be structured. Additionally, a standardized method for evaluating future performance of NL401 students has not been established. Therefore, a qualitative needs assessment is appropriate for this research.

There are several methods for conducting qualitative research. The two most popular and accepted methods for gathering qualitative data are interviews and focus groups, both of which will be used in this research. Interviews most often focus on gathering data from elite stakeholders who are assumed to be subject matter experts, while focus groups tend to concentrate on policy-oriented research (Harrell, 2005, p.2). The following paragraphs will expand on the interview and focus group methods employed in this research.

There are several factors to be considered when conducting interviews. The first factor is the amount of control the researcher wishes to exercise over his or her respondents. When placed on a continuum, the amount of control increases from informal to unstructured, semi-structured, and, lastly, structured interviews (Harrell, 2005, p.4). This research will employ semi-structured

interviews. This means the researcher has a list of things he or she wants to figure out from the opinions and knowledge of experts (Harrell, 2005, p.4-5). The next factor to be considered is how a sample of respondents will be accessed. This research employed both judgment and convenience samples. A judgment sample involves the collection of data from individuals the researcher believes have expert knowledge and/or unique points of view on the subject, and a convenience sample is taken from individuals who are easily accessed, but about whom the researcher has only basic background information.

Focus groups are the second method of data collection employed in this research. The purpose of focus groups is to incite dynamic verbal and non-verbal discussion between the facilitator and respondents, and among the respondents. They can be used during various phases of research, which include testing survey questions and developing word choice, and exploring why people feel a certain way (Harrell, 2005, p.30). Focus groups were employed for both purposes during this research. The composition of interview and focus group samples will be explained in detail later in this chapter. In the following paragraphs the training needs assessment model used for this research will be presented.

C. TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT MODEL

Allison Rossett's model for conducting a training needs assessment, cited in Gupta (1999), will be used in this research, and adapted to explore the educational needs of NL401. This portion of Chapter Four will outline the

precise model used for this research. Rossett's model is comprised of five phases of research.

Phase one of Rossett's model involves gathering preliminary data regarding the training needs of the target group; in this case the training and educational needs of NL401 students. The first step in this preliminary analysis is to poll clients, senior managers, end users, subordinates, and/or functional heads or managers of the target audience, to gather background information on the problem (Gupta, 1999). For this study, background information was gathered from the overall NL40X course coordinator, NL401 course coordinator, and the ODEV/PRODEV sponsored studies cited in Chapter Two. The next step of phase one is to use the background information to establish the goals of the assessment, to include the purpose and scope of the project (Gupta, 1999). The purpose and scope of this project are outlined in Chapter One.

Phase two of Rossett's model is the planning phase. During this phase, the researcher determines the type of data to be used, the sources of data, and tools that can be used to collect the data (Gupta, 1999). Because this research seeks to explore ways to restructure an existing training and education program, Rossett recommends including "the target audience, subject-matter experts, supervisors, and other related internal and external customers," in the data collection process (Gupta, 1999, p.121). Using these recommendations and guidelines, it was determined that this research would target, USNA faculty and staff involved in the teaching and administration of NL401; former NL401 students; and the external customer, the operational Surface Warfare Officer community. Also

during this phase, it was determined that focus groups and interviews would be the most appropriate tools for gathering data.

Phase three of Rossett's model consists of developing research tools and gathering data. It is during this phase of this needs assessment that the interview and focus group protocol was generated. First, a pilot protocol was created for use during focus group one, which was comprised of sixteen NL401 instructors. Next, the focus group was conducted, the results analyzed, and a tentative, semi-structured interview format was generated. Additionally, the pilot focus group helped to identify potential biases that could be corrected for by careful question design. It was during this phase that the educational needs of NL401 were addressed, and incorporated into this training needs assessment model. Next, minor changes to the tentative protocol were made after a pilot interview was held with a post-command Commander (O-5). Finally, convenience and judgment samples of study participants were identified, and will be outlined in the next portion of this chapter.

Phase four of this model involves analyzing the data. During this phase, all focus group and interview data were be transcribed and coded. The data were coded according to several themes. These code groups include stakeholder perceptions of current SWO JO performance, perceptions of optimal SWO JO performance, opinions of whether NL401 can address the gap between training and educational expectations and performance, perspectives of core SWO JO competencies, and finally, general stakeholder perspectives on how the USNA SWO Leadership Capstone course should be structured. This data, will then be presented and Phase

five of this needs assessment will begin. During phase five, findings, conclusions and recommendations on how NL401 should be structured to maximize this educational and training opportunity were made. The following portion of this chapter provides a detailed discussion on the selection of participants used in this study.

D. STUDY PARTICIPANTS

The objective for selecting participants for this study was to target all stakeholder groups who are directly touched by NL401 and/or who are directly impacted by its effectiveness. Stakeholders were divided into two groups according to their association with the course. Internal stakeholders, those employed at USNA in the ODEV or PRODEV Divisions, were separated into two groups. Group one consisted of active-duty Surface Warfare Officers currently serving as NL401 instructors and/or administrators (PRODEV). Group two consisted of a panel of ODEV Distinguished Military Professors (DMPs) and Permanent Military Professors (PMPs); a mix of active-duty Navy and retired military faculty members who have academic backgrounds in education. External stakeholders were divided into two groups based on operational experience. Group one consisted of a sample of Surface Warfare Officers whose operational experience ranged from post-division officer to post-command. Group two was comprised entirely of 2005 USNA graduates who were enrolled in the SWOS Division Officer Course. When selecting group one external stakeholder participants, care was taken to screen subject groups that would achieve proportionality in ship type experience, gender, homeport, and former billet assignments. With the exception of the DMPs, all

participants were active duty Surface Warfare Officers who
have served aboard ships with Ensigns who have graduated
from the Naval Academy, and who have extensive exposure to
the Division Officer at Sea Program during recent at-sea
assignments.   Table 7 is an illustration of the NL401
stakeholders who were targeted in data collection:

NL401 Stakeholder Map	
NL401:USNA Surface Warfare Officer Leadership Capstone	
Internal Stakeholders: Within USNA	External Stakeholders: The Surface Fleet
NL401 Instructors	Former COs, Prospective COs, Prospective XOs, Prospective Department Heads
ODEV Faculty: DMPs and PMPs	2005 USNA Graduates currently serving as SWOs

Table 7.   NL401 Stakeholder Map

The following paragraphs will elaborate on the composition
of each of the four stakeholder groups, and the chosen
method for obtaining data from each.

1.   Composition of Internal NL401 Stakeholders

a.   NL401 Instructors

The initial focus group for this research was
comprised of sixteen NL401 instructors.   All members of
this focus group were active-duty, Surface Warfare Officers
who are stationed at USNA.   Fourteen instructors were
members of the Professional Development Division, and two

were Company Officers serving on the Commandant's Staff. The rank composition of the group was as follows: thirteen Lieutenants, two Lieutenant Commanders, and one Lieutenant Junior Grade. All but two members were male, and all members reported to USNA within the last three years, therefore all had operational exposure to the Division Officer at Sea Program. Operational experience ranged from three and one-half years to eighteen years. Members of the group served on all ship types, in all USN homeports, and served in every Junior Officer at-sea billet including nuclear power billets. Two of the members completed two Department Head tours, three of members were prior enlisted, and ten of the sixteen were USNA graduates. Included in the group was the NL401 course coordinator, who is responsible for designing course material.

b.   ODEV Faculty: DMPs and PMPs

The second focus group held with internal stakeholders was comprised of six ODEV DMPs and PMPs, the Chairman of the Leadership Ethics and Law Department, and three researchers. These individuals are responsible for much of the background information provided in Chapter One of this thesis, and are engaged in curriculum design and implementation within the ODEV Division. All respondents hold master's degrees, and all but two respondents hold doctors of philosophy. Two respondents are serving on active duty, three are retired military officers, one is serving in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve as a Colonel, and all have experienced command in the U.S. Military.

2. Composition of External NL401 Stakeholders

a. *Surface Warfare Officers: Fleet Leadership*

The first targeted group of external stakeholders was active-duty Surface Warfare Officers of the rank of Lieutenant (O-3) or higher, who have served in the Fleet for at least two Division Officer tours. Interview subjects were selected to achieve proportionality in gender, ship-type experience, homeports, and billets held. This group was divided into four sub-groups according to experience level. Table 8 illustrates the composition of each sub-group:

Surface Warfare Officer Leadership: Composition of Interview Subjects		
Sub-Group	Number of Respondents	Gender Composition
Post-Command Commanders (O-5)	2	1 Male/1 Female
Prospective COs (PCOs)(O-5s and Lieutenant Commanders (O-4s))	6	5 Male/1 Female
Prospective XOs (PXOs) (O-4)	6	5 Male/1 Female
Prospective Department Heads (O-3)	6	5 Male/1 Female

Table 8.   Composition of Surface Warfare Officer Leadership Interview Subjects

The PCO and PXO respondent groups were selected as convenience samples from students enrolled in various curricula at Surface Warfare Officer School Command (SWOSCOLCOM) in Newport, RI. The post-command and Prospective Department Head respondents were selected as judgment samples from individuals stationed at SWOSCOLCOM and at USNA. All members were evaluated as having expert knowledge on core competencies of SWO Ensigns and adequate exposure to the Division Officer at Sea Program.

b. *Surface Warfare Officers: 2005 USNA Graduates*

The second group of external stakeholders was comprised of six, 2005 USNA graduates who are serving as Division Officers in the Surface Fleet. These respondents were taken as a convenience sample from students enrolled in the three-week Division Officers Course at SWOSCOLCOM. Five respondents were male, one was female, two were serving aboard ships homeported in Norfolk, two in San Diego, one in Pearl Harbor, and one in Yokosuka, Japan. The following paragraphs will outline the tools used for collecting and analyzing data.

E. TOOLS USED FOR COLLECTING AND ANALYZING DATA

The tools used for collecting and analyzing data for this research were focus groups and semi-structured interviews. Prior to each data collection event a brief introduction was given. The purpose of the introduction was to introduce the purpose and benefits of the research, topics that would be discussed, and to attempt to minimize biases associated with each respondent group or individual. The researcher assumed that active duty Surface Warfare Officers serving in the Fleet would be more inclined to

focus on the training goals of NL401, while respondents associated with the design, implementation and administration of NL401 would be more inclined to focus on both the education and training goals of the course. Thus, during the introduction, the stage was set using the following statement:

> USNA, with its faculty and staff, is suited for both the practical training and the education of its midshipmen. Through the previously discussed leadership continuum, midshipmen are exposed to many leadership, character, ethical, and professional development opportunities during their four years at Annapolis. The First Class capstone course is a three-credit hour, four-contact-hour course that is intended to serve as a culminating experience in the areas of leadership, character and warfare community specific development. It is also important to note that this is the last dedicated classroom time before Midshipmen are commissioned Ensigns, and report to their first seagoing command.

After setting the stage, each focus group and interview subject was asked the same set of five initial questions. However, questions were phrased according to the respondent's background and experience level. Appendix A provides the interview protocol. The researcher then probed the respondents to incite further, more detailed commentary as necessary. Each interview was scheduled for forty-five minutes, each focus group was scheduled for one hour, and each event was recorded using a digital voice recorder. Following the question and answer portion, each respondent was given a pre-formatted survey sheet for collecting demographic information. The sheet also contained each initial question, and space for the respondents to summarize their comments if they felt

compelled to do so. The following paragraph discusses the focus group and interview protocol in detail.

The first question was intended to -solicit? commentary on what respondent groups believe the purpose of NL401 should be. In other words, the researcher was trying to explore what respondents believe should be the difference between a Midshipman on day one of the course and an Ensign at commissioning that can be attributed to NL401. Probes following this question were primarily directed towards extracting thoughts on balancing the training of hard skills versus teaching soft skills such as leadership techniques in the Surface Navy, moral and ethical case studies, critical thinking, professional writing, and geo-political considerations, to name a few.

The second question was intended to explore thoughts and opinions regarding the delineation of training and education responsibilities between the Fleet and commissioning sources. The question was presented as if both the Fleet and USNA were ultimately responsible for preparing Division Officers and ensuring their future success. However, due to the scope of this mandate, some compromises may have to be reached. If this is the case, where should or could the line be drawn?

The third question was more directed than the first two. The intention of the third question was to explore thoughts and opinions of critical deficiencies in Ensigns reporting to their first ship, and whether or not they can be addressed in NL401. Probes for this question were intended to extract information that would help identify

and differentiate between common, poignant, training deficiencies, character deficiencies, and education deficiencies.

The purpose of question four was to extract stakeholder opinions regarding core Surface Warfare Officer KSAAs. This question was intended to pull out core competencies, and primarily training oriented data. Respondents were asked to list and describe the KSAAs and attempt to prioritize them according to importance.

The final question in the interview and focus group protocol was intended to gather information regarding the Division Officer at Sea program. This question was purposefully left until the end, because each preceding question and probes helped set the stage for gaining insight into the thoughts and opinions of what the educational goals of NL401 should be. This researcher believes that leaving the question until the end helped minimize the biases associated with the Division Officer at Sea Program. Respondents were asked whether or not they have noticed any recent trends in JO performance, positive or negative, that can be attributed to the program. Probes were then initiated to incite further, detailed discussion, and to determine if NL401 could minimize deficiencies and/or maximize the positive effects.

F. CHAPTER SUMMARY

The purpose of this chapter was to provide detailed discussion on the methodology used in this research that will set the stage for the presentation of data. First, discussion regarding general qualitative research was provided. Next, the training needs assessment model used in

this research was described in detail. Allison Rossett's model was used but was adapted to accommodate the educational needs and goals of NL401. Next, a detailed description of focus group and interview participants, and methods for identifying respondents was provided. Finally, the interview and focus group protocols used in this research were presented.

The following chapter will present the data that were gathered during this research. The recorded interviews and focus groups were transcribed and coded according to general themes that were noted during data collection. These themes include educational needs of NL401, training needs, SWO Ensign KSAAs and core competencies, ways in which NL401 can be structured to maximize course potential and improve the quality of USNA graduates serving in the Surface Navy, and ways in which NL401 can close the gap between current graduate performance and Fleet expectations.

V.   RESULTS

A.   CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results of the focus groups and interviews. Each digital recording was transcribed, and the data coded according to discernible, repetitive themes and sub-themes relevant to this research.   During discussion of each theme and sub-theme, examples of commentary will be presented, and previously discussed literature relating to education and training and capstone courses may be drawn upon to further illustrate common ideas.   The data presented in this chapter will then be used to draw conclusions about training and educational needs, and make recommendations for improving the structure of NL401.   The chapter will be organized into five sections; historical perspective, stakeholder perceptions of training needs, perceptions of educational needs, a prioritization of SWO JO KSAAs and competencies, and data relating to stakeholder recommendations for structuring the course.

B.   HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: THE IMPACT OF THE FIVE-MONTH SWOS ON SURFACE WARFARE OFFICER PERFORMANCE

The open-ended questions asked at the beginning of interviews and focus groups often initiated comments regarding the implementation of the DOSP.   Although much of this type of data was dismissed as being outside the scope of this research, some comments were useful in putting the expectations of Junior Officers who fall under DOSP into a historical context.   Data suggests that a majority of those interviewed do not view their attending the five-month SWOS as having a significant, positive, impact on their careers.

Instead, it seems that most respondents attribute their high performance to experiences such as Midshipman summer cruise, mentorship from a superior or Senior Enlisted, and education and training by their commissioning source. The following statements made by Commanders who are prospective commanding officers, illustrate opinions regarding expectations of Junior Officers prior to the implementation of the DOSP:

> (1) I went to SWOS for six months and then I went to a follow-on comm school for four weeks. But I don't think I was a contributor on the ship until after being onboard for at least a year. And when I say contributor, I mean stand-alone, they could leave me alone to do things…and that was with six months of SWOS.

> (2) I went to SWOS in San Diego, a long time ago, and I was convinced that I would show up to my ship and know everything about being a DIVO and ship driver. But when I got there, I realized that only a small part of what I learned actually transferred to my job. There were still a lot of tools I didn't have...and I mean professional tools, like systems knowledge and stuff, but leadership tools too. And it took awhile for me to be an effective Division Officer…When I look back I don't know if my time at SWOS really had an impact on my career. If I had not gone to SWOS, I feel like I would still be where I am today.

A Prospective Executive Officer said:

> (3) I haven't drank the kool aid yet as far as Division Officer at Sea being a success. But, I don't think it is a failure either. I mean six months of SWOS was excessive and mostly a waste of time…I don't know what the right answer is. I think that circumstances are improving for the new program to work…I think we will eventually see positive results.

Prospective Department Heads said:

70

(1) I don't know about SWOS…I don't think I learned much in my six months. I was just waiting to go to my ship…I learned more on my Midshipman cruise between my junior and senior year, about ships. I got a lot of conning time and experiences…

(2) I felt lost when I checked onboard and I went to SWOS…I was lucky to have a good Department Head who taught me a lot about my job. He really helped me learn how to be a successful Division Officer and OOD, and spent time developing all of the DIVO and bridge skills…If it wasn't for that, I think I would be in the same shoes as the new guys that I saw…Department Head leadership and involvement in the program (DOSP) made all the difference.

These sentiments were echoed by all former COs and PCOs, all prospective Executive Officers, two-thirds of prospective Department Heads, and only four out of sixteen NL401 instructors. Additionally, nearly all active-duty respondents specifically cited taking advantage of summer cruise as the experience that enabled them to initially outperform their peers in the Fleet; not their performance at SWOS. Therefore, data suggest that Junior Officers today should be able to approach the levels of performance demonstrated by those who attended a five-month SWOS course of instruction. The next section of this chapter is dedicated to presenting data that relate to current perceptions of JO performance expectations, and the training needs of future Surface Warfare Officers enrolled in NL401.

C.   STAKEHOLDER PERCEPTIONS OF TRAINING NEEDS

This portion of this research shows the stakeholder perceptions of training needs of Midshipmen enrolled in NL401. Here it is important to clarify what the researcher

considers training needs. Based on the literature review and supported by data collected, the term "training needs" is defined as those skill and knowledge requirements that are acquired through progressive repetition of tasks that build upon information and procedures to create proficiency. Knowledge and skills acquired through training are oftentimes easily measured through the use of established evaluation criteria; performance evaluation of skills taught through training is usually black and white.

For the purposes of this research a distinction is made between SWO Junior Officer (JO) training needs relating to performing the duties of a Division Officer, and those needs associated with performing watchstanding duties on the bridge of a warship. This is done so that the themes identified in this research can be better organized, and because of the dual roles SWO JOs are expected to perform during their Division Officer tours. Ensigns reporting to their commands are expected to contribute to their ship's mission by leading and managing a Division, and by standing watches on the bridge.

As Division Officers, Junior Officers are responsible for the people, equipment, spaces, and procedures associated with their particular job assignment. To provide further clarification and distinction, the Division Officer training needs outlined in this chapter will be associated with management, instead of leadership functions. These terms are often confused so the following definitions are provided. Leadership is commonly understood as being related to providing vision and enthusiasm to influence people to willfully effect and embrace change. Management is concerned with the effective

and efficient operation and use of resources within an established organizational system. Some common, historical examples of Division Officer training needs for Surface Warfare Ensigns are understanding the organization of their ship, understanding the operation of their equipment, knowledge of relevant policies, maintenance and material management (3M), personnel system knowledge and management, and professional writing.

As watchstanders, Junior Officers are expected to manage their bridge watchteam and resources, demonstrate an ability to safely navigate the ship during routine operations, and ultimately qualify as an Officer of the Deck (OOD) underway. Examples of watchstanding training needs are maneuvering boards, navigation principles, standard shiphandling commands, radio telephone (RT) procedures, basic engineering principles, and rules of the road.

Training requirements for both Division Officer and bridge watchstanding knowledge and skill sets may vary between ship-types and command preferences. However, data gathered from respondents with diverse operational backgrounds supports the assumption that they are negligible. Therefore, for the purposes of this research, the skill and knowledge requirements identified as training needs are assumed to be universal among SWO Junior Officers.

The following paragraphs will outline common themes identified in this research that help to explore the relationship between expected and actual performance of Surface Warfare Junior Officers in the Fleet, and the training needs associated with improving NL401 and SWO

Junior Officer performance.   Using the training needs
assessment model outlined in chapter four, these paragraphs
will provide discussion relating to optimal and actual
performance, feelings about training-related performance
problems, whether or not there is a gap between optimal and
actual performance, sources of performance problems related
to training, and whether or not NL401 is an appropriate and
practical venue for addressing the training needs
identified.

Data for this portion of the research were gathered
from interviews and focus groups consisting of active-duty
Surface Warfare Officers. The most common questions used to
solicit responses pertaining to this topic were:

1.   What do you believe the purpose of NL401 should
     be?

2.   Can you identify any common, significant
     deficiencies in Division Officers you have served
     with?

3.   With regards to SWO JO training, can you draw a
     distinction between the responsibilities of their
     first command and their commissioning source?

4.   Is there any particular knowledge or skill area
     that you believe USNA did not adequately prepare
     you?

Respondent data indicate consistent performance
expectations and perceived training needs among the SWO
leadership groups.   All respondents and/or groups of
respondents cited both Division Officer and watchstanding
knowledge and skill training needs, and many needs were
repeatedly mentioned.   The following noticeable trends
emerged:

- The Fleet expects Ensigns to be Division Officers the day they arrive onboard their first ship. Fleet leadership expects them to be trained and proficient in several management functions.

- Higher echelon Fleet leaders seemed to place Division Officer training needs at a higher priority than watchstanding training needs. COs, PCOs, and PXOs unanimously stated that it is their responsibility to train JOs in maritime skills, and have a strong desire to do so.

- NL401 instructors and prospective Department Heads (all Lieutenants) seemed to place watchstanding training needs at a higher priority than Division Officer training needs, and concentrated their discussion accordingly.

The following paragraphs outline themes relating to Division Officer training needs, and themes relating to bridge watchstanding training needs

1. Division Officer Training Needs

The following data collected from active duty respondents illustrate the ways in which Ensigns reporting to their first ship are expected to initially contribute. Among former COs, PCOs and PXOs, there was unanimous agreement that Ensigns reporting to their first ship are expected to effectively perform as Division Officers, and possess the knowledge and skill requirements associated with managing a division. One former Commanding Officer said:

> As the instruction says, the program (DOSP) is meant to have officers step onboard and be Division Officers. I think the first thing they need to know, they don't need to know how to be OODs yet, because they are going to be trained to do that…We are going to make them Division Officers.

75

One prospective Executive Officer remarked:

> From what I have seen and heard, ships are
> getting onboard with it (DOSP)…As long as DIVOs
> are actually given jobs, real jobs, and know some
> of the basics like how to conduct quarters the
> day they get there, I think the ship, you know
> their Department Head and Chiefs, and really the
> other DIVOs too, can prepare them, or help them
> do the rest.

Another opinion supporting training of basic Division
Officer knowledge and skills was taken during an interview
with another prospective executive officer:

> I think that should be a good goal of that course
> (NL401). To make sure that when they get out
> there and stand up there at quarters on their
> first day, that they are ready to take over the
> division.

Finally, a Prospective CO made the following comment:

> The seamanship, combat information center, all
> that crap, you learn it just by osmosis.
> Especially if you can and are doing your job as a
> DIVO. That stuff is easy to learn and pick up on
> just in day-to-day interactions with other people
> and Divisions on the ship.

Here it is important to again mention that all PCOs
and PXOs, and one former CO were assigned to SWOSCOLCOM in
Newport, RI. Part of their courses of instruction while at
SWOSCOLCOM covers the proper implementation of the Division
Officer at Sea Program, which explicitly states that
immediately upon arrival, Junior Officers will be assigned
jobs as Division Officers. Thus, data regarding the
expectations of JOs, may be focused on this area.
Additionally, this policy has been a source of contention
in the Fleet. Initially upon the implementation of DOSP,
there was no clear direction of how to employ Ensigns.

This, coupled with the scarcity of DIVO jobs created by the surge of JOs caused by the disestablishment of the five-month course, led each command to implement their own programs. Many Ensigns were first assigned collateral duties or placed in an ad hoc shipboard training pipeline prior to assuming traditional duties and responsibilities as Division Officers. Data indicate that this is no longer the case. All respondents, including the six Ensigns, indicated that recently commissioned SWOs were expected to be Division Officers within weeks of their arrival. Conversely, it is important to mention that most NL401 instructors and prospective Department Heads indicated that they have had no formal training on the proper implementation of DOSP. Most of the members of these groups were serving in operational assignments during the infancy of the program. This may account for their concentration of commentary on watchstanding training needs.

Data gathered from the Ensign respondent group provides further support for the assumption that Ensigns will be employed as Division Officers soon after they report to their first ship:

> I got to my ship and had to start working with my Division I think after about a week…we were on deployment. I took over for a guy who was moving to another division and he helped me out a lot. I mean I felt like I didn't know what I was doing really…
>
> INT: What do you mean? What do you wish you knew?
>
> I wish I knew more about how my division tied into other areas of the ship. Just basic stuff. I am the electrical officer, and my stuff is

really important, especially on deployment…I didn't understand how fast things needed to get done…

Another Ensign said:

> I showed up and my XO said you are the new 1st Lieutenant. I was surprised because that is not what my orders said, but I was excited about it. He told me who my Department Head was and I found him and he helped me get started. He gave me a list of stuff that I needed to do and told me that he would introduce me at O-Call (Officer's call) the next day. Then I had to do quarters and just introduce myself there. My chief is pretty good so he helped me. You know we went over what I needed to say.

When asked by the interviewer if that was awkward and did the Ensign feel like he should know what to say or do, or if he already knew it, he said:

> Yeah, I had an idea, but you know, turning over so fast…It wasn't embarrassing or anything. I was prepared. I think my first day went pretty good.

Thus, the data indicate that Ensigns are expected to be trained to assume the duties and responsibilities of a Division Officer immediately after they arrive. Common knowledge and skill functions of a Division Officer that were repeatedly mentioned during focus groups and interviews are general shipboard organization and practices, maintenance and material management, and personnel system knowledge and management.

a.   *General Shipboard Organization and Practices*

The following are comments made by PCOs, Ensigns, and PXOs regarding expectations for knowing general shipboard organization and practices. One former CO said:

I think that they definitely need to understand how a ship is set up…what each one of the departments is responsible for, and just some general practices on the ship…some things that we all probably take for granted that everybody sort of understands that. But they don't understand that when they get to the ship.

An Ensign said:

You need to understand how a division on a ship runs…it is not like a squad at the Academy…I think Ensigns need more familiarity with what you are going to see on a surface ship.

The following statement was made by a female O-4 PXO, and summarizes these expectations and needs:

I think my basic thoughts are they should understand how a ship, a general ship is set up, departments, how it all works, what is the function of a DAPA (Drug and Alcohol Abuse Program Administrator), what is the function of a CMC (Command Master Chief), who are these people that are going to touch your lives as a Division Officer and what do they do.

All former COs, PCOs, and PXOs believed that having an understanding of general shipboard organization and practices is a key training need. However, data suggest that this need may not be sufficiently addressed at their commissioning source. The following paragraphs will address this apparent gap.

Data gathered from SWO leadership and Ensigns indicate that some Ensigns may be reporting to their ships without being trained in, and having an understanding of general shipboard organization, and how different divisions and departments work together as a team to achieve the mission. A PXO said:

They need to know, OK, these are the Departments on the ship, so if I am the auxiliaries officer, I know what my functions are, and this is the Supply Officer, and I might have to deal with him or her…I don't see Ensigns really comprehending that stuff…For some reason I feel like they want to keep everything inside their own little box, and that is frustrating and led to problems on my last ship…You know, they need to know that it is OK, that they have to communicate with other officers onboard.

One Ensign, who did his summer cruise aboard a salvage ship, said:

My personal experience was…I hadn't set foot on a real ship until I got to my first command…I think there should be a baseline for OK, this is what you are going to be expected to do…a very basic outline of what a Division Officer really does.

One prospective Executive Officer mentioned that her Division Officers had never seen the ship's SORM (Standard Organization and Regulations Manual). Contained in the SORM is a detailed description of the function, and duties and responsibilities of each member of the command. She said:

The Ensigns that worked for me, really had no guidance before they got to the ship…I don't know if it was their fault, but if they had at least seen the SORM, and what they were expected to do, it would have helped them conceptualize what their first few days onboard would have been like…and maybe they wouldn't have seemed so lost.

The apparent lack of training or deficiency in training Midshipmen on what is expected of them as Division Officers as soon as they report to their first ship is a serious gap. Some Ensigns reported not even knowing who their Department Head (DH) or their immediate superior was, and what role their DH played in their daily routines.

80

Paraphrasing one Ensign, running a division is not like running a squad at the Naval Academy. Providing training on what their basic function, duties, and responsibilities will be is one portion of preparing them for success as Division Officers. The other, involves educating them in the affective and cognitive domains of the jobs they will shortly be performing. These domains will be explored in the next portion of this chapter.

b.   Maintenance and Material Management

The second sub-theme regarding Division Officer training needs that emerged was the maintenance and material management system (3M). This system is composed of the preventive maintenance system (PMS), and maintenance data system. The 3M system provides an efficient, uniform method for scheduling, performing, and recording preventive and corrective maintenance. Management of this system is considered a function of the Division Officer and work-center supervisor, normally a senior Petty Officer. One prospective Commanding Officer said:

> I guess Division Officers need to know just basic stuff, basic jargon so that they know what is going on…We went to a brief today, about how ships are failing in 3M, and we expect our division officers to be more involved, but it takes them at least six months to get involved when they do the self-training modules…we are at a disadvantage if they don't know that stuff…I guess I don't expect them to really know it when they first get there, but at least have an idea of how important it is…I want them to own it, or be able to own it (the 3M program), to be able to assert themselves and recognize and fix problems.

In addition to each PCO making similar comments on this subject, all six PXOs reported that when they were

Department Heads they wished their DIVOs were more involved with the 3M system. One said:

> I am concerned that 3M is a dying art in the Navy. And I am not sure why. I am being dramatic, but I don't think any of my DIVOs really understood PMS boards or writing jobs…I could never really put my finger on it, just a gut feeling like we, as a Wardroom, were missing something with 3M, like something was different from when I was a DIVO. I felt like the Chiefs and me were doing most of the work there…The LDOs and Warrants were the only DIVOs who were experts.

Additionally, When asked "what is the one thing you wished you knew the day you arrived on your ship," four out of the six Ensigns responded "3M." A few Ensign comments were:

> (1) I wish I was a little bit more aware, especially on 3M. I could write evals, that was fairly easy, I could understand technical talk about the Electronic Warfare gear, but dealing with some of the 3M and knowing this is what I need to look at for my weekly boards and my quarterly boards would have helped.

> (2) Other things were like how to get maintenance done and fix things. I mean CHENG (Chief Engineer) would tell me to fix something or order a part and I felt like I was always asking my Chief. I wanted to be able to do that stuff by myself, you know not do it, but make sure it was done right.

Again it is important to mention that data collected from PCOs and PXOs may be skewed by their assignment to SWOSCOLCOM. The Navy's 3M system has undergone fundamental changes within the last four years. Because of increased readiness requirements outlined in the Fleet Response Plan, the Surface Ship Maintenance (SHIPMAIN) program was developed to streamline the maintenance process. Navy leadership sought to maximize

the utility of its surface assets by maintaining the effectiveness of its maintenance processes, while increasing their efficiency. Greater responsibilities have been placed on the ships to do the right maintenance, at the right place, at the right time. As a result of these changes, more emphasis has been placed on maintenance training at all levels of SWO leadership, including SWOS PCO and PXO schools. Data indicate that maintenance was on the minds of PCOs and PXOs that were interviewed. Additionally, the Fleet has requested SWOS to allocate more time for maintenance training at the three-week Division Officer Course. However, data indicate there is limited exposure to the 3M program at the commissioning sources. It is this researcher's opinion that front-loading this type of training is feasible and will offer significant training value.

Administering this program and ensuring its success is a duty and responsibility of each Division Officer. Ensuring proper maintenance of their equipment is arguably their primary Division Officer duty. Data from all respondent groups indicate that Division Officers are failing in this area on a Fleet-wide scale. Additionally, data indicate that a gap exists between this training need and the curricula at the commissioning sources. All Ensigns, USNA graduates, stated that the level of 3M training they received did not prepare them for performing this management function in the Fleet. One said:

> We got 3M training, but it was basically, there will be 3M on your ship, and you will be an administrator. I think that is about it.

Thus, it appears that Ensigns are reporting to ships, being held accountable for their division's 3M program, and have not been properly trained.

c. Personnel System Knowledge and Management

The third recurrent Division Officer training expectation involved managing personnel. All Fleet respondents, including the NL401 instructors and Ensigns, cited personnel management as an expectation and need, but were seldom specific in their comments. The common functions Division Officers are expected to perform in this area are outlined in the Professional Core Competencies Manual for Officer Accession Programs, which was published by the Chief of Naval Personnel in 2001. However, four common sub-themes were identified in this research. They are, in order of precedence:

- Personnel Qualification System (PQS) and Training
- Enlisted Service Records
- Enlisted Distribution Verification Report (EDVR)

Data indicate that Ensigns are expected to report to their first ship having a basic understanding of at least each of these programs and documents. One PCO said:

> Understanding how admin works, understanding how PQS works and really how to manage a good PQS and training program so that your people stay on track, you know watch-team replacement plans, and understanding what a personnel service record is, a lot of those things that you can really actually understand before you get there. I think those things are important.

A former CO said:

> One other thing that I think we could have done better at the DIVO level was PQS and quals. There are so many personnel qualification

requirements associated with force protection and various other things…My DIVOs either didn't understand how to manage a good training program, or weren't organized enough to do it right…DIVOs on my ship were not training their people, or making sure they were trained right. I felt like every qualification that I signed was a reaction to something…My DIVOs didn't understand that they needed to be proactive with their programs.

A prospective Department Head, who recently completed two Division Officer tours provided the following comment:

When I was a DIVO I had all sorts of personnel problems initially. I was First Lieutenant and was put in charge of thirty or so sailors, and we were getting ready to deploy…I was a little overwhelmed…I guess when I get back out to the Fleet I really want my DIVOs to understand how the personnel system works, you know if I lose a sailor, how do I get a replacement, or can I, and just how to recognize manning issues, EDVR stuff. Those issues can really make it hard on a ship, especially if you aren't tracking them at the DIVO level…I don't think I was prepared to deal with some of those issues.

Additionally, when asked to write down the top five KSAAs they believe Ensigns should have when they report to their first ship, nine out of sixteen NL401 instructors mentioned one or more of these personnel management related themes. Eight out of sixteen said that NL401 was at best marginally effective at teaching these training requirements.

d. Soft-Skill Division Officer Training Needs

Lastly, what may be considered soft skill Division Officer knowledge and skill expectations emerged during the interviews and focus groups. These themes were more difficult to extract but were still widespread throughout respondent groups. The knowledge and skills mentioned most were understanding daily ship's routine and

effective time management, professional writing, and public speaking. The following are comments made regarding the need for understanding the daily routine and the need for Division Officers to manage their time accordingly. One former CO remarked:

> They really need to know, OK this is your Department Head, your boss, you should talk to him more than once every day. In the morning he will go to a meeting with the XO and the other Department Heads, the Captain will not be there, then he will hold a meeting with you and all your fellow division officers, then your chief will be waiting for you at quarters…and you may have a meeting, or a (PMS) spot-check. I'm being simplistic, but not really…and this stuff can easily be taught.

Another former CO stationed at USNA said:

> Just sitting people down and saying here is how to use a day timer, or here is how to use a palm pilot or here are a myriad of different ways you can be organized…pick one try it out, if it doesn't work, try another one. Personal time management is important.

Personal time management, and understanding of a Division Officer's daily routine, appear to be key expectations and training needs for Junior Surface Warfare Officers. Additionally, data indicate that a gap may exist between this training need and the training curricula at USNA.

Data indicate that there are general training shortcomings with regards to what the daily routine of a Division Officer should be. SWO leadership respondents reported that most of their Ensigns struggled with planning their day, and making and meeting appointments and deadlines. According to one PCO:

86

I was always amazed at how some Ensigns just failed to make it to stuff, and I mean events, briefs, and meetings with the CO, watch, everything. And this goes back to me being a Senior Watch Officer too. You always get a few who just don't seem to understand that sometimes their presence is required…They just weren't good at managing their time and prioritizing…and that is really important. Half of being a good Ensign is perfect attendance! I am serious, if you just show up and are seen, then there is an automatic assumption that you know what is going on.

One PXO, a USNA grad, said:

When I was a Department Head and Senior Watch Officer, I had a hard time getting my Academy JOs to be (where they needed to be) on time. I had a few that didn't work for me…that just could not make it to watch. I had to constantly make sure that they read the watchbills…and understood what time they had watch…It seemed to me that the ROTC guys were better at (making it to watch on time)…I felt like they didn't quite understand that it was a problem, or why I was always on their back…It was embarrassing.

Being trained and held accountable to planning out their day, so that know where they need to be is a key training shortcoming. Data indicate that Division Officers are losing credibility with their sailors, their peers, and their superiors because they display trends of being absent or late; they don't know how to plan and organize.

Professional writing was another soft skill theme that emerged. This area includes writing enlisted personnel evaluations (evals), fitness reports (fitreps) for Chief Petty Officers and Officers, and writing awards. Ensigns especially saw this area as an important training expectation and need, and five out of six made comments that indicate that they were not prepared. When asked what he wished he was taught, one Ensign said:

Eval and fitrep writing. We do it as MIDs within our squads but that is nowhere near how you write an eval or fitrep in the Fleet. A lot of Ensigns get out here, just like me, and learn the hard way. We think we went to college and we think yeah we can do this, but…that is something that we don't learn and I spent a lot of my time, a whole lot of my time, working on that stuff.

The next soft skill training expectation and need is public speaking ability. When asked about experiences that embarrassed them or made them feel uncomfortable, all Ensigns responded with their own public speaking story. Four of them were in Division Officer roles that required them to prepare briefs for particular events, and others were involved with command-level training situations that required them to address the wardroom or other members of the crew. Most did not understand that they were expected to do more than just "speak from a power-point brief;" their comments indicated that they were not prepared. One PCO said:

> I want my DIVOs to be really engaged in training, at all levels. And, one of the things that I expect is that they are able to speak to groups, whether it be the wardroom or a duty section or whatever…I want them to understand how to engage sailors and get them excited about training.

e.   *Positive Attributes of USNA Graduates*

Throughout the data, several positive attributes of USNA graduates with respect to Division Officer training emerged. Although some data were contradictory, it appears that USNA grads are better prepared than their peers in the areas of professional writing and public speaking. Anxieties over professional writing and public speaking emerged only in the Division Officer respondent group. In

fact, both former COs, and four of the PCOs and PXOs touted USNA graduates as being better than their peers in these areas. One former CO said:

> All of my Academy grads…were good writers, at least I thought they were, but that is one of those things that is really hard to define…I guess they were good at understanding what I wanted from them…As CO and when I was XO, I didn't have to keep sending admin paperwork back to them like I did with some of my other DIVOs. I only had to tell them once, and I would get what I wanted.

A PCO who was an NROTC graduate said:

> I was always impressed with the way my USNA JOs spoke in front of sailors…As XO I tried to put all my DIVOs in situations where they would have to address the crew, just to give them the opportunity to feel in charge, the face time, and so the crew would see them as being in charge…They gave great briefs, and had a lot of confidence that I didn't see in some of my other Ensigns…I think the Naval Academy prepared them well for that.

A former CO said:

> I never really cared how good my JOs were at writing. The only person that I needed to be a good writer was my XO and I think that no matter how bad a writer you are as a DIVO, by the time you are an XO you should be good at it…

Thus, the data suggest that perhaps anxieties and perceived shortcomings in this Division Officer training area are not attributable to training at USNA. It seems that in general, USNA is preparing its graduates to succeed in these management areas.

f.   Summary of Division Officer Training Needs

In summary, the data show that Fleet training expectations for Division Officer knowledge and skills are fairly narrow and consistent. Ensigns are expected to be Division Officers the day they arrive, and are expected to perform and demonstrate proficiency in several management functions. Knowing how to conduct morning quarters on their first day was frequently mentioned as a key baseline expectation and need. Second, all respondent groups indicated that a basic understanding of shipboard and divisional organization was essential and lacking. Next, what may be considered Division Officer hard skills were most often identified as expectations and needs. The most prevalent training needs and training gaps in this area were 3M and personnel system knowledge and management. The soft Division Officer knowledge and skills that were most frequently cited were time management, professional writing, and public speaking. Understanding the daily routine of a ship, and managing time accordingly appears to be a significant training gap. The following paragraphs present data relating to expectations for watchstanding knowledge and skills.

2.   Watchstanding Training Needs

Data indicate that expectations for watchstanding knowledge and skills are secondary to expectations of Division Officer knowledge and skills. All Fleet respondent groups indicated that watchstanding knowledge and skills were important training needs and expectations. However, the NL401 instructors and prospective Department Heads

cited them more frequently and passionately, while the former COs, PCOs, and PXOs mentioned them least. One O-3 instructor said:

> Another way to look at it is, you know, an Ensign's first impression that they are going to make is going to be on the bridge standing watch, and that's the real opportunity to show what the guys really know.

Prospective Department Heads said:

> (1) I think they should know, you know what I envision them learning on Midshipman cruise. They should understand the bridge watch rotation, and how that works, and they should have the basics down. Like, they should know how to do a moboard, a basic stationing or CPA problem…and then the basics of navigation, like the rules of dead reckoning, and how to read a chart…They should be money on standard commands.

> (2) When I showed up, I was king of the Ensigns because I knew the importance of the CO's Standing Orders and that I should tour the spaces before taking the watch and stuff like that…other people just didn't know that…and the Captain saw me as being a bright guy, and that made my life much easier.

An Ensign remarked:

> At least initially, showing up to a surface ship, he has to be a good ship driver. From what I have seen, since being on the ship and seeing some of the new Ensigns, it seems like ship driving is one area that they don't do too good in.

The former COs, PCOs and PXOs had distinctly different opinions than the O-3 respondents regarding Junior Officer watchstanding training expectations. The general sentiments of these respondent groups were that it is the ship's responsibility to train Junior Officers in bridge

watchstanding skills and procedures, and expectations for their knowledge and skill levels in this area are relatively low. Therefore very little discussion was dedicated to these types of needs. One former CO remarked:

> …every CO, it is their job to teach their people how to drive the ship. So, if they know standard commands and they are not scared to go up there and take the conn, that's fine. My job is to develop them in the seamanship side of the house.

A PCO said:

> The seamanship, combat information center, all that crap, you learn it just by osmosis. Especially if you can and are doing your job as a DIVO. That stuff is easy to learn and pick up on just in day to day interactions with other people and Divisions on the ship.

The four most frequently mentioned watchstanding knowledge and skill expectations, in order of precedence, were:

- Maneuvering Boards
- Standard Commands
- Navigation and Shiphandling Principles
- Rules of the Road

Due to the infrequency of discussion on watchstanding training needs in the former CO, PCO, and PXO respondent groups, this list was compiled primarily from data collected from the NL401 focus group and Prospective Department Heads. However, the following paragraphs present data that relate to bridge watchstanding knowledge and skill training expectations and needs that was collected from all respondent groups.

a. *Maneuvering Boards*

The ability to perform maneuvering board (moboard) calculations has long been a staple Junior Officer bridge watchstanding skill. In addition to training at their commissioning source, considerable time was spent at the five-month SWOS training JOs on moboards. Maneuvering boards provide watchstanders who are responsible for the safe navigation of the ship, a visual representation of relative motion. From a correctly performed moboard, closest point of approach (CPA) data can be obtained; along with courses, speeds, and times to station; true wind and desired wind; and contact avoidance data. Understanding moboards, and being proficient at doing them is essential for all Officer of the Deck qualified SWOs. Thus it is no surprise that those SWOs who have recently stood watch on the bridge, namely NL401 instructors and Prospective Department Heads, are passionate about moboard training. Data from these groups indicate that moboard training is a need, and a gap exists between the need and training. One NL401 instructor said:

> Think of the most important things, moboards, Rules of the Road, all those things that make you an impact player as soon as you check onboard…the things that were hammered to us [at SWOS] are the things that are missing most, because I have stood watch with people who haven't been to SWOS …You get underway for a group sail, and you are the OOD, and you have a JOOD that doesn't know how…to do a moboard and it (is not a good situation).

One Prospective Department Head said:

> You would expect, coming from the Naval Academy,that a guy should be able to do moboards…and amazingly we don't see that.

93

b. *Standard Commands*

Knowledge of standard commands was another frequently mentioned watchstanding training need. Standard commands are the orders given by the conning officer, the Junior Officer who is driving the ship, to the helm (rudder) and lee helm (engines). They are outlined in a standard format to eliminate confusion between members of the bridge watchteam, and it is imperative that they be given as such. Unlike moboards, standard commands were frequently mentioned as a training need by the more senior SWO leadership respondents, but not necessarily a deficiency. All former COs and PCOs, and five of the six PXOs mentioned this as a need at least once during the interviews. A former CO said:

> The only watch, or shipdriving related thing I would like them to know before they get onboard, but I don't even really think of it as a requirement, is standard commands…All of my JOs from the Naval Academy knew standard commands…They can easily be taught at the commissioning source or onboard.

A PXO remarked:

> The first time an Ensign drives a ship, or is the conning officer, should not be when they get to my ship. So I think it is reasonable to expect them to know standard commands, and for their sake, they need to know them well enough to be comfortable up on the bridge. That is where I think you draw the line between the commissioning source's training responsibility and mine, or ours as a ship.

All Prospective Department Heads frequently mentioned standard commands as a training expectation and two mentioned it as a need. One said:

> I was a rockstar on day one, just because I knew
> moboards and standard commands. Just knowing
> those things set me apart from the JOs that got
> there around the same time that I did.

Lastly, thirteen out of sixteen NL401 instructors believed standard commands were one of the five most important skills a Junior Officer should have prior to reporting to their first ship. One instructor, a Lieutenant Commander said:

> Well what was surprising was…I took a poll in my
> class and said, how many people have not conned a
> ship or vessel in the last year and I got 2/3
> that raised their hand. The other 1/3 did YPs…
> So I said if I were to give you a pop quiz on
> standard commands you would probably fail. [The
> student responded], 'yes sir. I would probably
> fail. I'm very rusty.' I thought wow, it has been
> less than a year and they have forgotten.

Therefore, data seem to indicate that knowledge of standard commands is both an expectation and a need.

c.   Navigation and Shiphandling Principles

The third most frequently mentioned bridge watchstanding training expectation was knowledge of navigation and shiphandling principles. This sub-theme encompasses the knowledge and skill sets that are taught in NN204 (Navigation and Piloting), and during YP and sailing training. Although this sub-theme is extremely broad, individual training needs that fall within the theme were frequently mentioned throughout the data. Due to time considerations and the breadth of questions, most of these needs were listed by the respondents as being part of the watchstanding skill set. Again, these needs were most frequently addressed by NL401 instructors and prospective Department Heads. Table 9 depicts individual needs and the

frequency that they were mentioned within each respondent group, and illustrates the predominantly watchstanding need orientation of the NL401 instructor respondent group.

	Respondent Groups (# of participants)						
Skill	NL401(16)	Former CO (2)	PCO (6)	PXO (6)	PDH (6)	ENS (6)	Total
Plotting	12	1	1	1	4	2	21
Lights/dayshapes	5	0	0	0	1	0	6
OOD Math	3	0	0	0	1	0	4
RT Procedures	11	1	1	2	3	2	20
Linehandling	7	1	1	0	3	0	12
Ship control forces	11	1	1	2	1	2	18
Shiphandling Characteristics	11	1	2	2	2	2	20

Table 9.   Navigation and Shiphandling Training Needs

The sub-themes that were mentioned in all respondent groups at least once, were plotting, Radio Telephone (RT) Procedures, shiphandling characteristics such as those found in a ship's tactical data folder, and ship control forces (wind, current, tugs, etc.). Thus, data indicate that these are perhaps the most important watchstanding training needs for JOs. The most frequently mentioned need was navigation plotting. This need was also the only navigation and shiphandling theme that was discussed in any detail. Most respondents who cited this

need, including one former CO, a PCO, and a PXO, expressed the need for only a basic understanding of plotting procedures. One PXO said:

> They need to know the basics of navigation…How to look at a GPS and plot their position on a chart. As far as navigation goes, that is about all I expect, and really all they need because the rest they will learn as they stand watch and get some underway time.

Additionally, most respondent data support the hypothesis that Midshipmen are expected be proficient in these skills after participating in the maritime continuum; their Naval Science courses, and mandatory training programs such as YP cruise, gray hull cruise, and Command, Seamanship, and Navigation Training Squadron (CSNTS) cruise. Only one PXO, a USNA graduate, said that he has seen a gap between these expectations and what he has experienced in the fleet. He said:

> Just make sure they know the fundamentals. Make sure they know navigation and plotting. When we took our navigation test (at SWOS) we had a sixty percent failure rate. And our class was ninety-five percent Academy grads…based on that and based on what I saw as a Department Head and DIVO. And I know as a senior you are supposed to be tested on it, but based on what I have seen I think it is an abysmal failure.

d. Rules of the Road

The last watchstanding training need identified in the research was Rules of the Road. Rules of the Road, or Navigation Rules, are promulgated by the United States Coast Guard, and provide a legal foundation for safe navigation of vessels in inland and international waters. Understanding and obeying these rules are unconditional pre-requisites for obtaining the Officer of the Deck

qualification. Understanding Rules of the Road provides the groundwork upon which all other maritime skills must be built. In fact, while at SWOS, all PXOs and PCOs must take a written Rules of the Road test and score 100 percent prior to being assigned to their next command. Therefore, it is no surprise that when discussing watchstanding training needs, all respondents cited Rules of the Road. However, very little discussion was dedicated to this area, possibly because it is seen as such a fundamental need, and thus it is unreasonable to hypothesize about the existence of a training gap. One former CO said:

> I think there should be tests that cover things like standard commands…and Rules of the Road…You can't give enough Rules of the Road tests. It is just one of those things that you have to know.

e. *Positive Attributes of USNA Graduates*

Throughout the data, positive attribues of USNA graduates with respect to watchstanding training were identified. Data from the former COs and three PCOs indicate that in general, USNA graduates are good bridge watchstanders. One former CO stationed at USNA said:

> I mean all of them were good ship drivers…all of the JOs from the Naval Academy had a good sense of relative motion and they picked up on things on the bridge easily. I think they get a lot of that stuff here.

A PCO said:

> Throughout my career, even as a DIVO, I have always thought that Academy guys were better ship drivers. I guess they are exposed to it earlier with the YPs…I have always admired their skills on the bridge.

98

The same PCO went on to say that during a deployment while he was XO, his Captain trusted only three OODs to stand watch, and all of them were Academy graduates.

f. Summary of Watchstanding Training Needs

In summary, Division Officer skill and knowledge requirements appear to be the primary training expectations and needs for Division Officers in the Fleet. Second to these training needs are watchstanding hard skills. The skills most frequently mentioned were, in order of precedence, moboards, standard commands, navigation and shiphandling principles, and rules of the road, all of which are covered throughout the maritime continuum. In other words, there appears to be a need to review this material during 1st Class year, and NL401 is the appropriate venue for doing so. The following paragraphs will outline data pertaining to educational needs of SWO Junior Officers.

D. STAKEHOLDER PERCEPTIONS OF EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

For the purposes of this research, the term educational needs is used to mean those knowledge, skill, ability and attitude requirements that must be taught in NL401 in order to further promote the moral and mental development of Midshipmen as they transition to becoming SWOs and leaders of a division of sailors. Unlike training needs, educational needs seek to initiate sets of learning processes that will allow Midshipmen to apply their own interpretations and energies to assessing and acting in situations they will encounter as Officers in the Fleet. Often these needs are associated with leadership functions

99

and performance, instead of management functions and performance, and are not easily evaluated using quantitative criteria.

This portion of research is dedicated to exploring stakeholder perceptions of the educational needs of Midshipmen enrolled in NL401. The following paragraphs will present and discuss data collected from all respondent groups including the ODEV/PRODEV DMPs and PMPs. This section will be organized according to the types of educational needs that emerged from the focus groups and interviews. Data will be presented to illustrate optimal and actual SWO JO performance in the Fleet as it relates to the affective and cognitive domains of learner behavior. Also during this portion of the research, potential education gaps will be identified and discussed. This portion will be concluded with a discussion regarding positive attributes of USNA graduates that relate to these educational needs.

According to Popham's model for conducting educational needs assessments that was described in Chapter III, researchers must be attentive to all three domains of learner behavior. These domains are the affective, cognitive, and the psychomotor. Psychomotor needs are most often associated with the performance of a repetitive physical task such as in manufacturing or production. Because of the nature of their duties and responsibilities, educational needs for Division Officers in the Surface Navy rarely involve the psychomotor domain. Therefore, only the affective and cognitive domains will be explored in this research.

1. Affective Needs of SWO JOs

Division Officers are the lowest ranking SWOs in the chain of command aboard surface ships. As such, while leading their division and in the execution of their watchstanding duties, they serve closer to the enlisted sailors than higher-echelon officers. They closely interact with sailors on personal and professional levels on a daily basis, and have the ability to exert more direct influence over sailors than any other SWO leadership group. To successfully satisfy the leadership requirements and responsibilities inherent in their office, SWO Division Officers must possess certain affective qualities. The following paragraphs present and discuss themes relating to the affective needs of SWO JOs that emerged during this research.

As described by Popham, affective needs are those attitudinal, valuing, and emotional needs that individuals must possess in order to effectively perform their job. The affective domain refers to the manner in which individuals emotionally process events and interactions. Included in this domain are values, feelings, appreciations, enthusiasms, motivations, and attitudes (Krathwohl, D. R., Bloom, B. S., & Bertram, B. M., 1973). During this research, data pertaining to the affective needs of SWO JOs were gathered from internal and external NL401 stakeholders, and several themes were identified. They are:

- Foundational Values: Integrity, Honor, Moral Courage
- Officership Values: Knowing Their People, Engaging Their People, Setting the Example

- Realizing, Understanding, and Using Their Power: Intrusive Leadership and Assertiveness

- Confidence

- Enthusiasm, Motivation, and Initiative

It is important to mention here that a general theme throughout the data was that these educational needs are what will have the most significant impact on the perceptions of a Junior Officer. The educational themes, as opposed to training themes, were much more difficult to extract from respondents who are very close to the operational Fleet. However, once probed, the examples of deficiencies that were cited were much more poignant than those cited during discussions of training needs. It is also important to note, as Colonel Art Athens, Distinguished Military Professor of Leadership, stated during the DMP/PMP focus group:

> When Junior Officers fail, when they are fired, and bring discredit upon themselves, the Navy or Marine Corps, and the Naval Academy it is for character related issues, not performance…

In other words, there is a presumption that as a Naval Officer you are a man or woman of character. Data support that good character will not necessarily guarantee success, but character flaws will guarantee failure. The incidents where JOs demonstrate character failures are ones that stick in the minds of those work with them.

a. *Foundational Values*

The first theme that emerged was a need for SWO JOs to have what one PCO described as foundational needs, which for the purposes of this research will be referred to as foundational values. These needs can best be described

and packaged as those internal characteristics that the general public would attribute to the character of Naval Officers. Interview questions that most frequently garnered responses associated with this theme were:

1. Have you noticed any common, poignant deficiencies in JOs that could be addressed by their commissioning source? This question was often probed with a specific question about character deficiencies.

2. How do you think USNA can best prepare a future Surface Warfare Officer?

3. Based on your experience do you believe JOs today fully understand the responsibilities of officership?

Not surprisingly, common examples given by interview and focus group respondents were integrity, moral courage, honor, and professionalism. The same PCO mentioned above said:

> Anyone who shows up to your ship will have deficiencies. And whatever you emphasize during the short time we train them, you know if you emphasize one thing then something else will be dropped off. So, I don't think we can be too optimistic about any of those [training] things…So I am more concerned about the foundation of the person. What matters to me is integrity, moral courage, and respect for his office and his sailors…that is my take on it.

At some point during all interviews with PCOs, former COs, and PXOs, mention was made of the need for JOs to possess and internalize the Navy's core values, and nine out of fourteen stated that they believe it is a need that must be addressed. Most members of these respondent groups stated that they have served with more than one Junior Officer who violated the Navy's Core Values. In most instances, incidents cited by respondents were not lapses of judgment but lack of character. In a discussion of her

leadership case studies program that she implemented on her ship, one former CO remarked:

> We just had all ensigns do the case studies together and then make a presentation to all the Department Heads and all the Departmental Chiefs, and they walked them through the case study and what they would do, and how did honor courage and commitment fit in, and then it was pretty eye opening that even some of those that had been there for quite some time were still a little bit clueless even after a year and a half onboard.

A Prospective XO said:

> …one of my JOs, my First Lieutenant, lied to me about ordering his Chief to operate a piece of gear that we knew shouldn't be moved. It is a long story, but it was the only time I lost my cool I think…That stuck with me and left a bad taste in my mouth about all the JOs from the Naval Academy. It was the first time I had been lied to, or knew I was being lied to by a shipmate, a fellow officer, and maybe I was paranoid or something, but I just felt like they were all shady…Like they were trying to get away with stuff…

Another PCO said:

> The only real personnel problem I had in my wardroom involved a Naval Academy graduate who was arrested on base fraternizing with one of my enlisted sailors. I've heard those stories, but still couldn't believe it…She knew the rules and apparently had been talked to about her relationship with this sailor by some of my other Ensigns, which made me question more than just her character…I really believe they could have saved her career…

One PXO, an OCS graduate said:

> On my ship, the Academy guys showed up and it was absolutely guys gone wild…I saw guys with their Chief and everybody else looking at them and thinking what is with that ass-hole, who can

> barely stand up at quarters…I saw that more than
> often than I wanted to, and I counseled more than
> a few of them on my last ship.

Conversely, one PXO said:

> I never had issues with kids lying or anything,
> it didn't matter which commissioning source they
> were from…I never had that problem.

Therefore, data indicate that at least some Junior Officers in the Surface Navy are failing to demonstrate these foundational values. This is a serious educational gap that needs to be addressed. NL401 is an excellent opportunity to revisit the Navy's Core Values.

b. *Officership Values*

The second recurring affective need theme that emerged throughout the data was a need for Division Officers to be educated in and possess what will be referred to as Officership Values. These values can best be described as external, instead of internal, leadership characteristics that would commonly be attributed to Officers in the United States military. These themes were more prevalent throughout the data than the foundational values, but commentary was not as alarming. The three sub-themes relating to Officership values that were most frequently mentioned in the data were setting the example and leading from the front; communication; outwardly demonstrating a deep feeling of responsibility for the sailors who worked for them, and willfully engaging them on a regular basis.

All respondent groups noted setting the example and leading from the front as primary Officership values. These values emerged in discussions with both former COs,

five of six PCOs, all PXOs, and five out of six prospective Department Heads. Additionally, nine out of sixteen NL401 instructors mentioned setting the example as one of the top five KSAAs Junior Officers need to possess. A former CO said:

> On day one, they need to understand that there is a presumption on the part of the Captain, the XO, the Chief, and most importantly the sailors, that that officer who just graduated from Annapolis knows how to be a Division Officer…Sailors expect to be led, and want to be led, and need to be led by their Division Officer…And if they set the right example, if they act like the professional officer that they are expected to be, I believe that they will be successful. On the other hand if they don't, then they will probably not do too well. You can't overcome that bad first impression.

When asked what leadership traits he expects his Division Officers to possess, a PCO remarked:

> If you give me an Ensign who is happy to be there, who is proud to be on my ship, and if they set a good example, are good role models, then I will be satisfied and believe that those individuals will be successful leaders…And I don't care so much about perfect uniforms and shiny shoes. I have seen some Ensigns that think that that is what setting the example means, and Academy guys in my experience have always had superb military bearing…What I want them to understand is they need to act like someone their sailors want to be…They should be respected by their sailors, and understand that they don't have to be their friends all the time, and I know that some of my JOs were not looked at by the crew in that way.

In addition to setting the example being identified as an education need, data also indicate that a gap exists between what is expected and what is seen. A PXO provided the following comment:

Two Ensigns from the Naval Academy and two Ensigns from ROTC reported to my second ship on the same day. And two of them, one Naval Academy and one ROTC, showed up and it was so bad, they looked so bad, that the Senior Chief had to take them aside and tell them they couldn't come to quarters dressed like that ever again. If you're in the Engineering Department, and the Senior Chief is pulling you aside, then you have serious issues. You know, don't be a moron. I immediately thought these two were idiots…It was hard for me and them to get over that.

The second recurring Officership education theme that emerged was being able to communicate up and down the chain of command. Most PCOs, PXOs, and prospective Department Heads mentioned communication as a need, and nine out of sixteen NL401 instructors believed it was an important aspect of a Junior Officer's education. Most respondent groups however, provided little discussion on this theme. One PXO said:

I am big on communication. Being able to get the right information to the right people at the right time will be a big part of my job as XO, and I need my JOs to be onboard with what I expect. When I was a Department Head I always told my DIVOs that I wanted them to come to me with the problem, the impact, and their proposed solution. Not a 100 percent solution, it took a while for some of them to get that part…And it seemed like some of them never got it…They really need to understand that bad news gets worse with age.

An NL401 instructor, a Lieutenant Commander, said:

It used to drive me crazy when my DIVOs would bring their Chiefs, or not even bring their Chiefs, but send their Chiefs, to see me about problems…They were not good at getting information from their guys and listening to their guys, and coming to me with something that made any sense…Understanding the communication

flow that I expected from the chain of command was something they just didn't get when they first started working onboard.

Lastly, a former Commanding Officer said that one skill she wished her DIVOs could have improved on was listening. She said:

> I think the first skill, and I call it a skill, is listening. DIVOs have to know their people, and know how to listen to their people, and I mean listen to them about professional stuff and personal stuff…And then know how to recognize and identify problems and relay that information to the right people.

The last Officership education need that was identified was possessing, and outwardly demonstrating, a deep feeling of responsibility for the sailors who worked in the Division. Again, this theme was difficult to extract and identify, but was present in data gathered from all respondent groups. The ability to relate to enlisted sailors in a way that effectively promotes mutual respect, responsibility, and positive change in the professional and personal lives of the sailors they are charged with leading, seems to be a prevalent need according to Fleet leadership. One PCO said:

> We went up to Great Lakes a few weeks ago, to see recruits and one of the things it did was sort of re-instill an incredible sense of responsibility in me, and perhaps that is one of the things that we (COs) sense is missing, you know an intense responsibility for the people below you…I worked at JFPAC with Marines and you know they don't eat before their men, and every thought they had was what is going on with their men…and I am not sure what accounts for that difference between the Marines I saw and the Ensigns on my ship.

Another PCO said:

> I am an ROTC grad…As an ROTC grad I have always looked at the Naval Academy guys and said, man, these guys have a warped sense of what it means to be a Division Officer…They all had an attitude. And I always thought, and maybe it is self-serving, but I always thought that the ROTC guys understood or related to the guys that were working for them a little better…were a little more humble maybe.

Finally, when asked what she would emphasize to an Ensign heading to a ship, a former CO remarked:

> I would really emphasize engagement… Meaning that JOs need to understand that it is OK for you to ask Seaman Timmy how he is doing, how his wife is doing, how's their new baby doing, how's your financial situation doing…you know not being hesitant to be involved with their people, including their peers…It seems like they are afraid to get involved, or don't know that they should get involved, when in fact they have a responsibility to get involved…

c.   Understanding and Using Power: Assertiveness

During the research a general theme of SWO Ensigns either not understanding or failing to use their positional power was another affective need that emerged. Twelve out of fourteen COs, PCOs, and PXOs said that in general, they believed their Junior Officers need to be more assertive in their roles. Additionally, three Ensigns said that from what they have seen, Junior Officers need to be more assertive. When asked if there were any common, poignant deficiencies that he has seen in JOs in the Fleet, one former CO said:

> From my perspective it (a deficiency) is taking charge, being aggressive…What Captains want to see is their DIVOs being aggressive…Most of them have that in them, they just don't know when to

apply it. They think they are too junior, they
don't think they have the legitimacy, or
whatever…they don't realize how much power they
have…They (sailors) are expecting their DIVOs to
lead them, and lead them aggressively, just
stepping forward…What I see are the ones that do
that, really outperform the other ones.

One PCO said that as an Executive Officer, he tried to
impress upon his DIVOs that it was their duty to correct
sailors and give orders on the spot. He said:

I had trouble getting my DIVOs to just do the
basics. The things that my Department Head and
XO beat into us when I was a DIVO. Things like
supervising sweepers, keeping spaces clean, spot-
checking their spaces for gear adrift, and even
keeping their own staterooms clean. Things like
that…

The same PCO went on to say that he believes he has noticed
a general trend of ships elevating the positional power of
the Chief Petty Officers to the point where DIVOs are
essentially rendered obsolete. He was visibly distressed
by what he was saying, and then remarked:

You know, when I was a DIVO, I felt like I was
prepared, and understood that it was my
responsibility to train my Chief every now and
then. They don't know everything and JOs need to
realize that. The DIVO/Chief team is there to
support each other. The DIVO can't defer to the
Chief on every issue…Not once on my last ship did
I see or hear of a DIVO standing up to his or her
chief over something that was important…That
would have made me happy.

Additionally, when asked what KSAAs Ensigns should possess
when they arrive onboard, one Ensign's first answer was:

He needs to have assertiveness. He can't be
pushed over just because he is the new Ensign,
because once it happens…

In response to the interviewer asking if he had seen that happen, the Ensign said:

> Yeah, I saw it a lot on my ship. You know the Ensigns being almost taken advantage of because they were seen as being new and young and inexperienced.

d.   Confidence

Confidence is the fourth affective need identified in the research. Confidence was cited in every interview and focus group, and along with motivation and initiative was the most frequently mentioned educational need.   Unlike the other leadership-oriented needs, confidence was a theme identified very often in the NL401 focus group and Prospective Department Head interviews in the context of bridge watchstanding. One NL401 instructor said that the most important difference between a Midshipman on the first day of class and an Ensign on his first day onboard is confidence. Furthermore, the PCO and PXO group cited confidence in dealing with superiors, Senior Enlisted, and on the bridge as a need that sets high performers apart from their peers. One PXO said:

> I won't support qualifying a JO as an OOD if they aren't confident up there. And I have seen a lot of Ensigns who are smart, they are good shipdrivers, and whatever, but they didn't know that they were…A Captain won't be confident in them if they are not confident in their own abilities…It really has hurt some of their progress from what I have seen.

e.   Enthusiasm, Motivation, and Initiative

The fifth and last affective need of SWO JOs is a sense of enthusiasm, motivation, and initiative. All SWO leadership respondents commented that these qualities separated their top performers from sub-standard

performers, and eight out of sixteen NL401 instructors considered either enthusiasm, motivation or initiative to be a top-five KSAA. One PCO remarked:

> The division officers I saw that were failing lacked motivation and initiative. You hear this a lot from a lot of different people. You know Captains saying they secured all TVs on the ship because they can't get their divos out of their staterooms during the day…

When asked where or if a distinction could be drawn between the commissioning source and the command with respect to responsibilities for training and educating Ensigns, one PCO said:

> Well don't forget about the individual. I believe both are ultimately responsible, but a lot of onus is placed on that Ensign as well…Especially with DOSP, there is an expectation that they have the initiative to learn on their own, and not just learn what is on the CDs, but go out on their own, walk around the ship and the Division, and apply the knowledge that they learn from the CDs.

Based on the data collected from PCOs, PXOs and Department Heads there seems to be a theme of Division Officers lacking the initiative or assertiveness to insert themselves into the daily operations of their divisions. One PCO speculated that one possible source of this perceived trend could be that Ensigns who didn't go to SWOS lack the knowledge of procedures and policies relating to these issues, and are therefore hesitant to assert themselves. He also said that "it was distressing as a CO to see Ensigns and DIVOs not showing that they wanted to be involved."

2. Cognitive Needs of SWO JOs

Cognitive needs of SWO JOs were identified in the research as the second educational expectations and requirements of SWO Junior Officers. Cognitive needs are a domain of learner behavior that includes knowledge and the development of what may be thought of as intellectual skills. Unlike the affective domain, the cognitive domain can be thought of as a process. In other words, in order to maximize an individual's cognitive potential, he or she must first absorb knowledge, then comprehend that knowledge, be able to apply it in unique situations, be able to use it in analyzing a situation, synthesize different pieces of knowledge, and eventually use that knowledge to make evaluations regarding ideas, procedures, or materials (Krathwohl, D. R., Bloom, B. S., & Bertram, B. M., 1973). Arguably, this process is what a "true" capstone course seeks to accomplish in its students; these needs promote critical thinking and decision making.

The cognitive needs of Surface Warfare Junior Officers are relatively broad and harder to explicitly identify than other types of training and educational needs. Additionally, Junior Officer's cognitive process must continually evolve as they progress through their career. For the purposes of this research, cognitive SWO JO educational needs are separated into two categories. The first category includes those needs that are essential for their success as Division Officers and bridge watchstanders. The second category pertains to the cognitive skills that are required of the most junior officers in an organization that only promotes from within, and expects all of its JOs to become higher-level leaders.

113

At a very basic level, Division Officers are expected to comprehend the function and operation of their equipment, and have enough knowledge to understand basic trouble-shooting procedures. These needs are specific to certain shipboard billets. They must also have enough knowledge of all shipboard systems to understand how their equipment affects the ship's mission, and other divisions and departments. Along the same lines, as watchstanders they must have enough understanding of the relationships among equipment, procedures, and operational environment, to make time-sensitive decisions that may affect the safety of the ship. These cognitive needs can be thought of as what would be taught at the five-month SWOSDOC, the DOSP computer-based training modules, at a billet specific school, and/or onboard the ship. Many argue they are most easily learned through hands-on experience. Surprisingly, cognitive Division Officer and watchstanding needs rarely emerged in this research. This researcher hypothesizes that there is an assumption among Fleet leaders that JOs will acquire these cognitive knowledge and skills once they arrive onboard their first ship. Therefore, very little analysis of this type of data will be conducted.

Junior Officers must also possess a basic set of knowledge and skills that can be built upon to ensure that they are prepared to be leaders at each stage of their career. This level of cognitive needs can be thought of as what Midshipmen are taught in History and Naval Science courses such as NS310, Strategy and Tactics. Examples that emerged in the research are, understanding the current geo-political environment, understanding the mission of the

114

Navy in the context of U.S. National policy and strategy, Surface Warfare weapon systems and basic tactics, and joint military operations.

a. DIVO and Watchstanding Cognitive Educational Needs

Very little data emerged in the research regarding this need set. The respondent groups that mentioned these types of needs most frequently were the Prospective Department Heads and NL401 instructors. No former COs or Ensigns, and only one PCO, and two PXOs spoke of these needs-- but only briefly. Additionally, no Division Officer-specific needs emerged; they all pertained to general shipboard knowledge and bridge watchstanding. Table 10 illustrates the needs identified and how frequently they were mentioned:

	Respondent Groups (# of participants)						
Need	NL401(16)	Former CO (2)	PCO (6)	PXO (6)	PDH (6)	ENS (6)	Total
Damage Control	4	0	1	1	2	0	8
Engineering Principles	3	0	0	0	1	0	4
Combat Systems	3	0	0	0	1	0	4

Table 10.   Cognitive DIVO and Watchstanding Needs

Data suggest that Fleet leaders assume that Division Officer-specific cognitive needs are best addressed during billet-specific training schools following commissioning. Additionally, it appears that Damage Control knowledge is the most important watchstanding cognitive need according

to the active-duty stakeholders. After listing two bridge watchstanding training related KSAAs, standard commands and moboards, one PXO said:

> I will add one more thing…Damage Control. You know it is just one of those things that everyone onboard needs, is required to know, and as a bridge watchstander they have to know how to use some of the equipment, you know, what is at their disposal…

In response to the interviewers question about whether they need that right away when they show up, the PXO said:

> Yes. I guess the level of knowledge I expect is that when they get there, Ensigns know more than a deck seaman. You get that stuff at boot camp, so they should get it at the Academy.

b. *Strategy and Tactics Cognitive Educational Needs*

Strategy and tactics cognitive educational needs emerged most often in the DMP/PMP focus group, but also within the higher-echelon respondent groups. Again, the DMP/PMP group of stakeholders is comprised of active-duty, retired, and reserve officers of the rank of O-5 (Navy Commander) or O-6 (Navy Captain) who are teaching at the Naval Academy. However, their educational backgrounds and their current jobs as leadership, ethics, character, and professional development professors set them apart from other respondents. Data from this group indicate that they are primarily concerned with preparing Midshipmen to be Junior Officers by providing them with the cognitive skills associated with being a Naval Officer. Data suggest that critical thinking and decision making in the context of the current geo-political and national strategic environment are very important to them. It is also important to note

that discussion in this focus group concentrated on the appropriate structure of the USNA Leadership Capstone Course, and data regarding cognitive educational needs were gleaned from such discussion. The following paragraph provides data from the DMP/PMP focus group.

One DMP, a Colonel in the Marine Corps reserve, said:

> As a commander at a higher level, I would hope that my Junior Officers are some of the most adaptable, creative, and critical thinkers out there.

Another DMP, a retired Navy Captain, mentioned that he was concerned with feedback from the Fleet regarding the way Ensigns are currently utilized. He said:

> What I am hearing [from the Fleet] is that now we want, the COs want, Ensigns to be able to come out and run 3M programs and things like that. And I was always under the impression in Command that my wardroom learned how to fight the ship…we get the ship underway, we go into combat, and we bring it back. That is the function of the Wardroom.

The Marine Colonel illustrates what he believes to be necessity of understanding current geo-political environment by saying:

> The decision of whether to arm your Marines or sailors with weapons as they go into Indonesia, or not have them because of the political ramifications…they weren't worried about that in 1940. We are. And that is going to become even more so as young officers are having to make those kind of decisions when they are sent out as task force commanders or whatever Admiral Mullen is thinking about doing with young Ensigns. I think he is going to be very aggressive and these

guys are going to be very involved with unique circumstances that have very little to do with what we are used to doing.

The active duty SWO respondents also commented on cognitive needs, but less frequently than other need groups, and only joint operations emerged as a theme. One former CO and three out of six PCOs mentioned and understanding of joint operations as a perceived need. One PCO said:

> I think you take that time and you, I mean look at the War College, I mean you are in an academic environment there at the Naval Academy. Look at other academic institutions of higher learning around here…maybe that is the time to start introducing Sun Tzu and Clausewitz and all that stuff, to all these lads and lasses, they are in a receptive mode for that type of stuff. And look at the broader development of SWOs down the road…right now there is almost a crisis because O-6s are punching out of the Navy and the O-5s don't have their JPME. And we're not developing joint officers. Why don't we teach Division Officers the commander's estimate of the situation, which is the War College version of how to do joint military operations. Let's start teaching midshipmen how to be joint and maybe we'll get a better product down the road.

A former CO said:

> On the education side, I think it is important that they understand the mission of the Navy, and how Navy operations fit into the joint military environment. When I was CO the first half of our deployment we were working with the Air Force and Army helping them detect and locate TBMs (Theater Ballistic Missiles). The second half we were out in CTF 150 doing MIO (Maritime Interdiction Operations) and surveillance with like, I think it was six different Navies…So that stuff is very relevant for a JO. They should be learning that joint stuff earlier in their careers than I certainly did.

118

To provide further clarification, CTF 150 is a coalition task force that is responsible for command and control of interdiction operations in the Central Command area of responsibility.

3. Positive Attributes of USNA Graduates

Unlike training attributes, positive educational attributes of USNA graduates were rarely mentioned during the data collection process. Only three respondents, both former COs and a PCO, mentioned an educational attribute, and it is therefore difficult to speculate on whether or not USNA Ensigns outperform their peers in these areas. One former CO said that her Naval Academy graduates:

> ...were all very respectful, I found them to be respectful, I mean I was the Captain too, but I thought they…did a good job of trying to balance things in their lives. I think they understood the importance of working out, the importance of having fun, the importance of working hard, um and how that all needs to balance.

Another former CO said that all of his USNA graduates were inquisitive, and said:

> And I find the Academy guys know where to stop with their questioning attitude, and I like that. I see that as a good thing…And I guess the Academy guys just had a better sense of military bearing when it came to dealing with superior officers.

E. SUMMARY AND PRIORITIZATION OF KSAA'S AND COMPETENCIES

This section of the research provides a brief summary and prioritization of previously mentioned data themes. Overall, the most frequently mentioned needs were associated with training, but data suggest that the most poignant deficiencies or gaps involve educational needs.

With respect to training needs, Division Officer knowledge and skills were more important to stakeholders than watchstanding needs. With respect to educational needs, the affective domain was more important to stakeholders than the cognitive. The following provides a comprehensive, prioritized list of themes regarding educational and training needs:

- **Affective Needs**
  - *Foundational Values*
  - *Officership Values*
  - *Assertiveness*
  - *Confidence*
  - *Enthusiasm, Motivation and Initiative*
- **Cognitive Needs**
  - *Strategy and Tactics*
  - *DIVO and Watchstanding Cognitive Needs*
- **Division Officer Training Needs**
  - *Shipboard and Divisional Organization*
  - *Maintenance and Material Management*
  - *Personnel System Knowledge and Management*
  - *Soft Skills: Writing and Public Speaking*
- **Watchstanding Training Needs**
  - *Maneuvering Boards*
  - *Standard Commands*
  - *Navigation and Shiphandling Principles*
  - *Rules of the Road*

Additionally, data suggest that Ensigns who currently report to their first command should be able to approach the performance levels of those who attended five months of

Division Officer school at SWOS. It appears that DOSP computer-based training provides Ensigns with most of the training and cognitive educational DIVO and watchstanding needs that they must fulfill to be successful. The following section provides data relating to stakeholder perceptions of how NL401 should be structured.

F. INTERVIEWEE AND FOCUS GROUP INPUT REGARDING THE STRUCTURE OF NL401: DOME, SPIRE, OR BOTH?

The primary question this study seeks to answer is, how should NL401 be structured, so that a balance is struck between character, ethical, and leadership education, and practical training, so that the inherent educational and training opportunities are maximized. In the following chapter, this question will be attempted to be answered according to themes identified in the previously discussed data, supplemented by interviewee and focus group subjects' responses to direct questions on the topic. This type of data was primarily collected from the DMP/PMP focus group, but other groups of respondents were occasionally probed with these questions outlined in Chapter Three:

- Can a capstone provide both closure and further exploration?
- Can both be accomplished in the time allotted?
- Since the goals seem to move in opposite directions, is one cancelled out by including the other?
- If we are forced to chose between the two, which should be emphasized?

Data in this section will be presented according to the type of capstone structure it supports. First, support for a dome structure will be discussed, and will be followed by a discussion of support for a spire. Finally,

data that indicates NL401 should be structured to provide both closure and further exploration will be presented.

1. Support for a Dome Structure

Support for structuring NL401 as a capstone that provides closure to the USNA experience was found most frequently in the NL401 Instructor and DMP/PMP focus groups. However, their interpretations of what a true culminating capstone should look like, and the content that should be addressed, were entirely different.

The NL401 Instructor focus group, was overwhelmingly supportive of structuring to course to provide closure to what they refer to as the maritime continuum. The maritime continuum includes all aspects of the Midshipman professional development experience, but is focused on ensuring proficiency in maritime skills. NS100, NN204, gray hull cruise, YPs, and CSNTS are integral parts of this program. Only one respondent in this group stated a belief that the course should do more than culminate the maritime continuum. The course coordinator said:

> [NL401] is a culmination of the time that they are going to spend in this thing described as the maritime continuum. The maritime continuum is where they are going stairstep build this package of maritime skills, and 401 is an opportunity to sortof revisit some of those skills and practice some of those skills.

These sentiments were echoed throughout the focus group. Data indicate that they are primarily concerned with ensuring Midshipmen graduate with the maritime and watchstanding skills that they are expected to gain during this continuum, and do not see NL401 as an opportunity to

significantly address education and training in Division Officer leadership and management skills.

Although support for this type of structure was found in the DMP/PMP focus group, it was not as overwhelming, and their opinions of what material should be culminated were much broader. Several comments were made indicating that individuals with this type of academic and operational backgrounds are likely to conceptualize a true capstone as having a dome structure. One said:

> I see it as an opportunity to put everything you have learned together into one big problem…It should be something that takes everything they have learned, and I mean seamanship and navigation, history, everything, and bring it together in some type of Final Battle Problem… That is my interpretation of what a capstone should do.

The Chairman of the Leadership Ethics and Law Department said:

> When I think of a capstone, I think of something that ties together all the leadership experiences a Midshipman has had while they are here, with the other disciplines…It should bring all the behavioral science, character, and ethics courses together with some sort of Midshipmen focused leadership problem…

Therefore, it appears that interpretations of what a capstone should accomplish are much broader among these respondents. Data indicate that approximately fifty percent of these respondents believe NL401 should be a dome.

2. Support for a Spire Structure

Support for structuring NL401 to provide further exploration into the duties and responsibilities of SWO

Division Officers, and Naval Officers in general, was most frequently found in the Fleet respondent groups. Data indicate that at least eighty percent of the former COs, PCOs, PXOs, prospective Department Heads, and Ensigns, believe the purpose of the course should be to prepare Midshipmen to become proficient in management skills they will need as Division Officers. This is clearly evident in the previously discussed data. One former CO said:

> To prepare an Officer to benefit the ship the best, it is the Division Officer skills that should be taught. We will get meaningful work on day one from that Ensign as a Division Officer.

Again, data suggests that most Fleet respondents believe the course should educate and train Midshipmen in Division Officer and watchstanding skills, but the emphasis should be placed on Division Officer leadership and management proficiencies.

3. For and Against Closure and Further Exploration

Support for structuring NL401 as a combination of dome and spire was extremely limited. Additionally, the NL401 Instructor respondent group provided arguments against attempting to provide further exploration in the time allotted for the course. The following comment by the course coordinator summarizes the sentiments of this group:

> From the opinion of somebody who taught it last semester or taught it last year, and somebody who was responsible for it for a couple of years, the worst parts of the course…were the parts where we were trying to replace SWOS… We just can't do it in the amount of time that we have.

The following paragraph outlines data that support a combination of the two philosophies.

124

Support for attempting to accomplish both closure for the leadership continuum and USNA experience, and further exploration into the duties and responsibilities of Naval Officers was only found in data from the DMP/PMP focus group. Approximately forty percent of these respondents support this type of structure. It is important to note however, that unlike other interviews and focus groups, discussion during this event was centered on the appropriate structure of the course. These respondents were prompted with a brief overview of the dome and spire, and all others were not. One respondent stated:

> We are under a significant amount of pressure to make the curriculum more Midshipmen focused, more focused on the Midshipman experience. I think the right thing to do is make it more Fleet focused. And I think the answer may be to do both…I think we can do both.

Another DMP said:

> I don't think we can say that this course is only a culmination of experiences at the Naval Academy…I don't even think we should focus only on preparing them for day one [on the job]…Part of it is day one, but I'll take the Marine Corps example…the second part would be preparing them for Expeditionary Warfare School…and the third is hopefully an underlying foundation of what it is to lead, the officership piece. We do a disservice if we aim at making them, using the Marine Corps example again, making them prepared to be a Captain.

These data indicate support for structuring the course to not only prepare Midshipmen for their next job in the Fleet, but prepare them to be successful later on in their careers.

G.   CHAPTER SUMMARY

The purpose of this chapter was to present data collected from focus groups and during interviews. Data was presented according to themes identified during the research. First, data which provides historical perspective regarding the expectations of Junior SWOs was discussed. Next, stakeholder perceptions of Division Officer and watchstanding training needs were presented and related KSAAs were identified and discussed. Then perceptions regarding the educational needs of Midshipmen enrolled in NL401 were presented, along with related KSAAs. Next, the SWO JO KSAAs that were identified in the research were summarized and prioritized. Finally, data relating to stakeholder opinions of how NL401 should be structured was presented and discussed. These data will be used along with previously discussed literature to summarize the findings, draw conclusions regarding the research questions, and make recommendations for improving the structure of NL401.

VI. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research will be used to improve the performance of SWO Junior Officers during their initial at-sea Division Officer tours. The purpose of this research was to use qualitative data to determine how the USNA SWO Leadership Capstone Course (NL401) should be structured so that the education and training potential of the course is maximized, and to determine the appropriate balance between leadership education and practical training. Additionally, interview and focus group data was used to identify and prioritize knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes that may improve SWO Ensigns' performance during the first few months of their initial at-sea Division Officer tour.

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the results and findings of the data analysis. Furthermore, this chapter will be used to discuss the relationship between the findings and current USNA academic policy, leadership and professional education curricula, USNA education and training programs, and current Fleet policies, namely DOSP. This chapter will be organized into three sections. First, a summary of findings will be presented. Next conclusions drawn from the data will be discussed. Finally, recommendations based on the data, literature, and background will be made.

A.   SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING NEEDS

As mentioned in Chapters III and IV, this educational and training needs assessment was designed to help make a determination regarding potential gaps in the training and education objectives of NL401. These gaps, or needs, were

identified and prioritized during data analysis, and thereby used to draw conclusions on the most appropriate course structure. The researcher will discuss the needs identified during the assessment.

1. Division Officer at Sea Program

Determining whether or not the Division Officer at Sea Program is a success, is well outside the scope of this research. However, because DOSP is a recent, fundamental change in the way SWOs train their Junior Officers, a needs assessment of NL401 must be conducted in the context of this program. Additionally, it was difficult to conduct interviews with active-duty SWOs without discussing DOSP in detail by respondents. Much of that type of data was irrelevant to research needs, but some proved to be useful. DOSP data indicate that the Fleet expects Ensigns to report aboard their first ship and immediately fulfill a Division Officer role. In order for ensigns to be prepared to assume these duties and responsibilities, they must be educated and trained in key areas that will be discussed throughout this chapter. Additionally, data indicate that the DOSP process is gaining acceptance in the Fleet, and ensigns who are commissioned under the program can approach leadership and management performance levels similar to those who attended the traditional SWOS Division Officer Course. The burden of preparing them has shifted from SWOS to the individual officer, the Fleet, and the commissioning sources.

2. Education and Training Needs, Gaps Identified, and Prioritization of Needs

Data indicate that significant educational and training needs should be addressed in NL401. The following paragraphs outline the findings that pertain to these needs. The findings are presented in the order of priority determined during data analysis. Here it is important to again note the qualitative nature of this research. The reality of NL401 is socially constructed; the course content, teaching methods, and effectiveness are dependent on each particular instructor, and the students in each section, among other factors. Additionally, the variables are not objective nor easily reduced to numbers. The answers to each research question rely upon complex analysis of interwoven variables that proved extremely difficult to measure. Care was taken by the researcher to maintain objectivity when analyzing data and drawing conclusions. However, it was impossible in this case to eliminate all subjectivity.

a. Education versus Training Needs

Analysis of the data shows that NL401 should be designed to satisfy both the educational and training needs of SWO junior officers. However, data indicate that needs oriented along educational lines will have the greatest influence on overall JO performance. Although Fleet stakeholders tended to initially concentrate their discussion on training needs and shortcomings, once probed, respondents provided ample data to support a need for education focused on the SWO JO at the commissioning source. The educational needs identified spanned both the affective and cognitive domains of learner behavior.

b. *Affective versus Cognitive Educational Needs*

Data indicate that educational needs of SWO JOs include the affective and cognitive domains of learner behavior and are more associated with leadership than management. Also, data indicate that affective needs will have a greater impact on performance than any other training or educational need, and the gaps identified were most distressing; these are the factors collectively labeled "character." The affective needs identified were, in order of precedence:

- Foundational Values: Integrity, Honor, Moral Courage
- Officership Values: Knowing their people, Engaging their people, Setting the example
- Realizing, understanding, and using their power: Intrusive leadership and Assertiveness
- Confidence
- Enthusiasm, Motivation, and Initiative

Data indicate that cognitive educational needs should be prioritized as the next most important educational need. But, using the data, a determination of where these needs should be prioritized in the overall NL401 curriculum could not be objectively determined. The DMP/PMP focus group seem to believe, although not unanimously, that teaching cognitive skills should take precedence in the course, and is what a capstone should be designed to do. No other respondent groups shared similar concerns, which is probably attributable to differences in academic backgrounds. The cognitive needs identified were strategy and tactics, and Division Officer and watchstanding cognitive needs. Strategy and tactics needs include geo-political considerations, National Security

strategy, and joint military operations. Division Officer and watchstanding cognitive needs that were identified are, in order of precedence:

- Damage Control Fundamentals
- Engineering Principles
- Combat Systems Fundamentals

The following paragraphs provide a summary of the training needs identified in the research.

c. Division Officer versus Watchstanding Training Needs

Training needs identified during the research were specific knowledge and skill requirements that enable a SWO JO to perform the duties of a Division Officer and the duties of a bridge watchstander. When analyzing the data, a clear division among respondent groups emerged. Former COs, PCOs, and PXOs seem to believe that commissioning source training should focus on Division Officer needs, while NL401 instructors (two Lieutenant Commanders, and fourteen Lieutenants) and Prospective Department Heads believe that training should focus on bridge watchstanding needs. However, many of the junior respondents contradicted themselves by indicating that they expect ensigns to check onboard with the watchstanding skills that should be learned on summer cruise. This researcher hypothesizes that the disparity is caused by misconceptions and inadequate knowledge of the Division Officer at Sea Program in the more junior ranks of Surface Warfare Officers. Specifically, it appears that these junior respondent groups either do not know about, or do not agree with the DOSP policy requiring JOs to be Division Officers immediately upon their arrival to their first

ship. Data indicate that Division Officer training needs should take precedence over watchstanding training needs in the SWO leadership capstone.

Several Division Officer training needs were identified in the research. They are, in order of precedence:

- General Shipboard Organization and Practices
- Maintenance and Material Management
- Personnel System Knowledge and Management
- Soft-Skill Division Officer training needs such as professional writing and public speaking

Training gaps were associated with all of these needs except soft skills. The watchstanding needs identified are, in order of precedence:

- Maneuvering Boards
- Standard Commands
- Navigation and Shiphandling Principles
- Rules of the Road

Here again, it was difficult to determine the significance of training gaps associated with these needs. However, data provide enough evidence to determine that these needs are extremely important to some stakeholders, particularly the NL401 instructors, Prospective Department Heads, and Ensigns.

d.   Competencies

Data indicate that core SWO JO competencies that should be addressed by NL401 are primarily focused in Parry's administrative and cognitive competency groups. All stakeholders indicate that they are primarily concerned with a Division Officer's ability to manage time,

prioritize, set goals and enforce standards, plan and schedule work, identify and solve problems, make decisions while weighing risks, and think clearly and analytically. The supervisory competency group seems to be the second most important competency group, and includes training, delegating, evaluating performance, disciplining, and counseling. The third most important group seems to be the communication group, which consists of listening and organizing, giving clear information, and getting unbiased information. This prioritization of competency groups will aid in making a determination of how NL401 should be structured, and can be used in future curriculum design.

B. CONCLUSIONS

The following paragraphs present conclusions to the research questions that have been drawn from the data analysis. First, conclusions regarding potential problems with the current NL401 structure and content will be presented. Next, a conclusion regarding the general effectiveness of the leadership continuum presented in Chapter Two will be discussed. Finally, conclusions to the primary research question will be presented.

1. Problems Identified Regarding Current NL401 Structure and Curriculum Content

The following paragraphs outline potential problems with the current NL401 structure and content. Based on data analyzed in Chapter Five, and literature presented in Chapters Two and Three, it appears that the theory behind the course and the purpose of NL401 are contradicted by the

way in which it is taught. Furthermore, it appears that some of the potential problems with implementing a capstone are manifested in the course.

a. Problem One: NL401 Vision and Reality

The first problem with NL401 is that the course vision, promulgated by DMPs and PMPs, either is not communicated well to the instructors, and/or is not internalized by them. It seems that the transition of responsibility for the course from PRODEV to ODEV, from practicum to capstone, has only really occurred at the DMP/PMP level (in theory), and is yet to take effect at the instructor level (in practice). Data indicate that the current NL401 curriculum is structured primarily as a dome (providing closure for the curriculum), with a small portion of the course dedicated to promoting further exploration (preparing students for their next job as Surface Warfare Division Officers). Members of the NL401 and DMP/PMP focus groups, those responsible for implementing and designing the curriculum respectively, explicitly stated that when they think of a capstone at the Naval Academy they think of a dome. However, the vision of NL401 is for the course to be a culminating experience in the areas of leadership, ethical, and character development, and to prepare Midshipmen for their transition to becoming Surface Warfare Officers – the vision implies some sort of balance of dome and spire characteristics. However, data indicate that in reality, a disproportionate amount of instruction time is spent culminating the Maritime Continuum, and very little, if any, is spent on leadership, character, and ethical development. The following statement made by a Lieutenant Commander NL401

instructor illustrates this point, but did not fit well under the results chapter subheadings. He said:

> I had a section of around fifty, and two of them could do basic tracking problems on a moboard when we started last year. By the end of the semester they all had confidence that they could do it.

This statement seems to imply that an entire semester was spent ensuring Midshipmen were trained in how to do a moboard. Therefore data indicate that the Surface Warfare Junior Officers who teach the course focus on the needs they believe are important. Additionally, regardless of the current course structure and balance, several problems associated with implementing a capstone course are manifested in the curriculum and/or its instruction.

b. Problem Two: NL401 as a Dome

The current NL401 curriculum and instruction method reveals one problem identified by Heinemann, and referenced in Chapter Three of this research. A preponderance of data indicate that the course focuses on reviewing material previously covered in the maritime continuum. This material is not integrated into any other disciplines, resulting in a repeat of training, with no overall synthesis. If this is the case, and it seems like it is, NL401 really doesn't qualify as a capstone course, and practicum would be a more appropriate term to describe it.

c. Problem Three: NL401 as a Spire

Some data indicate that NL401 is currently structured as a spire. The curriculum outlined in Chapter Two seems to follow a spire structure, and most NL401

instructors risked contradicting themselves by professing their belief that the most beneficial aspect of the course was the ability for Lieutenants who recently served on ships to answer direct questions pertaining to what "the real Navy" was like. This may indeed be beneficial for Midshipmen, but if too much emphasis is placed on what Heinemann calls personally relevant and practical material, the course quickly becomes petty and superficial. This may be why Midshipmen refer to the course as "leadersleep." Emphasizing only practical material, some of which has previously been repeatedly covered in the maritime and leadership continuums, cannot be stimulating for the students.

2. The Role of NL401 in the Overall Effectiveness of the Leadership Continuum

Based on the data analysis, this researcher concludes that the leadership continuum is effective for training Surface Warfare Officers. The opportunities it presents for the leadership, character, ethical, and professional development of Midshipmen, provide ample instruction and practical application time for each student to be a successful Naval Officer. It provides great potential for USNA to remain the premier accession source for Surface Warfare Officers. The use of YPs, the sailing program, simulators, summer training, and leadership opportunities for each Midshipman provide the potential for USNA to produce a far superior product than alternative commissioning sources. However, because service selection occurs at the end of Fall Semester of Senior Year, much of the continuum may be viewed by Midshipmen as being personally irrelevant. Data indicate that some Midshipmen

may not be taking advantage of the opportunities presented in the continuum, or at least arrive at NL401 with vastly different proficiencies. Thus NL401 is critical to capping off this continuum and ensuring that each Midshipman who will become a SWO graduates with a minimum of educational and training needs met.

3.   How Should NL401 be Structured?

Determining how NL401 should be structured so that a balance is struck between meeting the educational and training needs of the Midshipmen is the primary research question addressed in this thesis. Analysis of data collected during the needs assessment indicates that according to stakeholders, educational needs, particularly the affective and cognitive domains of learner behavior, should be a higher priority in curricula that prepare Midshipmen for Surface Warfare Officers than training needs. Furthermore, it appears that the leadership continuum, and its subordinate maritime continuum, is an effective means of training Midshipmen in maritime skills. The following paragraphs draw conclusions for each of the questions posed by Heinemann in Chapter Three, which are critical to answering this research question. They are:

1. Can NL401 provide both closure and further exploration?
2. Can both be accomplished in the time allotted?
3. Since the goals seem to move in opposite directions, is one cancelled out by including the other?
4. If we are forced to chose between the two, which should be emphasized?

(Cited: Heinemann, R., 1997, p.1)

These questions will be discussed, conclusions drawn, and finally a determination of the appropriate structure of the course will be made.

a. Can NL401 Provide both Closure and Further Exploration?

According to the data, literature, and policies, NL401 can provide both closure to the leadership and maritime continuums and further exploration into the duties and responsibilities of Surface Warfare Officers. A combination is desirable and achievable. Although data indicate that the "worst" parts of the course were those that tried to replace the five-month SWOS, the time allotted for instruction seems to indicate that with careful planning, both can be accomplished. DOSP does not require or recommend that commissioning sources attempt to replace SWOS. Midshipmen experiences within the leadership and maritime continuums should reinforce the skills taught in NL100, NN204 and other core courses, so that by the time a Midshipman is in his or her last semester, there should be very little training required in the areas of maritime skills. These experiences accomplish several of the steps Heinemann recommends taking to improve the success rate of an integrated structure.

The first suggestion is that a major should have a complimentary entry course that prepares students for the entire major. This is accomplished by NL100, NE203, NN204, NS310, NL112, and other core academic courses. These courses also address Heinemann's recommendation that all students in the major be required to take a core survey course that covers humanistic and critical approaches to the discipline. Lastly, the leadership continuum addresses

the third suggestion that all students be required to participate in an internship. If USNA is indeed a "leadership laboratory" then it may be argued that the Midshipmen experience is a prolonged internship designed to produce premier Navy and Marine Corps officers. Internships away from the Academy are conducted during the summers aboard ships, aircraft squadrons, submarines and with Marine Corps units.

b. Can Both be Accomplished in the Time Allotted?

The research concludes that both closure and further exploration can be accomplished in the time allotted, with the following constraints imposed:

1. NL401 cannot replace SWOS in the time allotted. Replacing SWOS should not be a goal.

2. Midshipmen should be expected to arrive in NL401 with a thorough understanding of maritime skills, so that time spent on YPs or in simulators is the only time dedicated to training maritime skills. The two-hour laboratory period should be sufficient for meeting the training needs.

These constraints will be further addressed in the recommendations portion of this chapter.

c. Is One Cancelled Out by Including the Other?

There is no evidence to support that the inclusion of one philosophy cancels out the other. Many of the training and educational needs in NL401 are complimentary, especially the areas of Division Officer training needs, affective needs, and cognitive needs. Evidence suggests that the most difficult needs to integrate are the watchstanding training needs. Respondent data, especially from the NL401 instructor focus group,

suggest that during the time spent on watchstanding training needs very little learning and thinking is occurring outside of those areas. Furthermore, data collected from most senior respondents suggest that in their opinion these skills are more easily learned and taught aboard a ship. Data from Department Heads also suggests that their superior performance in watchstanding skills is attributed to their maximizing the potential of summer cruise, and not their performance in the classroom. In summary, data suggest that, due to the nature of the training, if NL401 is structured to train Midshipmen exclusively in the areas of maritime skills, other learning opportunities will be cancelled out.

d. *If We are Forced to Chose Between the Two, Which Should be Emphasized?*

An answer to this question is difficult to determine. Perhaps a more appropriate question would be: If we are forced to chose between several structures for the course, which content area should be de-emphasized? As previously stated, in the case of NL401, data from nearly every respondent group supports different philosophies regarding the structure of the course. They are:

- **NL401 Instructors** – overwhelmingly support closure for the maritime continuum.

- **DMP/PMP** – This group appears to be split between supporting an experience that provides closure for the leadership continuum, and supporting a combination of dome and spire characteristics.

- **The Fleet** – overwhelmingly support further exploration into the duties and responsibilities of Division Officers.

As previously mentioned, data suggest that focusing entirely on providing closure for the maritime continuum is the structure that will promote the least integration, synthesis, thinking, and learning. Therefore, this is the structure that should be avoided. The nature of watchstanding skills training is entirely practical, and as such doesn't meet the criteria for being an effective capstone course. However, evidence does not suggest that these needs should be entirely ignored.

e. *An Ideal Structure?*

A definitive conclusion regarding NL401 course structure is difficult to reach. Each need identified in the research is important to the stakeholders, and if all are met in NL401, the course will undoubtedly improve the performance of USNA Ensigns in the Surface Navy. It seems like the most appropriate structure, which strikes a balance between education and practical training and maximizes the potential of the course, would be a combination of all four structures identified during data analysis with only the two-hour laboratory period dedicated to providing closure to the maritime continuum. It appears that the most important needs are affective and cognitive educational needs, followed closely by Division Officer training needs. The course should be structured to integrate and synthesize training and education in these areas. More discussion will be provided in the recommendations section.

4. Summary of Conclusions

In summary, data were used to draw conclusions regarding the needs of NL401, and gaps associated with

those needs. Several affective and cognitive educational needs were identified as a top priority for the course. Division Officer training needs were the next most important, followed by watchstanding training needs. Regarding the effectiveness of the leadership continuum and its subordinate maritime continuum, data suggest that both are highly effective in ensuring watchstanding training needs are met; USNA is maximizing the potential of its unique resources. Data suggest however that the continuum may not be as effective in ensuring the affective and cognitive, and Division Officer training needs are satisfied. Based on these data, it was determined that NL401 should be structured to focus on integrating and synthesizing the USNA experience with Division Officer training and education in order to be most effective as a capstone course. Further, NL401 will not be improved by totally integrating the Division Officer at Sea modules into the course, but may be improved by introducing a few of them. The final research question regarding a Fleet feedback mechanism will be addressed next in the recommendations section of this chapter.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

This portion of Chapter VI is dedicated to exploring recommendations for improving NL401. Based on the conclusions, several recommendations are made. First, Heinemann's remaining suggestions for designing an effective dome and spire combination capstone course will be discussed. Next, the impact of having a separate practicum focused on culminating the maritime and watchstanding continuum, and a capstone focused on the culminating the USNA leadership continuum, and promoting

further exploration will be presented. Third, a recommendation regarding who is most qualified to teach the capstone course will be given, followed by recommendations pertaining to specific needs. Then suggestions for three feedback mechanisms will be given. Finally, recommendations for further research will be presented.

1. Heinemann's Remaining Suggestions

Heinemann's remaining two suggestions for making a capstone course work are very simple. The first is that the curricula should require students to maintain all course material that was previously covered. This seems easy enough to implement, and could be strengthened by requiring a graded examination during the first few weeks of the capstone course. This would force students to keep and review previously covered material and would allow the instructors to ascertain their level of preparedness and comprehension.

The second suggestion is to ensure all instructors have access to and review the syllabi of related courses. This also seems easy to implement, and seems like the only way to achieve synthesis. This would help lessen the problem of NL401 instructors only covering personally relevant material. A further suggestion is to have first-year instructors teach the seminar courses, and only the most senior instructors who have been exposed to the other curricula teach NL401; this can be thought of as a leadership continuum for NL401 instructors.

2. Separate Practicum and Capstone?

The next recommendation is to separate the NL401 curriculum into a practicum, culminating the maritime

continuum and potentially the Division Officer training needs, and a true capstone that culminates the leadership continuum. Data support the belief that First Class Midshipmen who service select Surface Warfare, have had the opportunity to acquire the basic maritime skills they are expected to possess when they arrive at their first command. They should not need any more than a two- hour-laboratory period per week to culminate the maritime continuum. Two hours of classroom instruction and hands- on experience on YPs and in simulators appears to be more than enough to ensure the performance of USNA graduates is superior to their peers from other commissioning sources. Furthermore, this will allow the instructors and administrators to focus their efforts on ensuring the educational needs are met during the course. As previously stated it is difficult to integrate and synthesize the maritime training aspect of the course into any other areas of instruction. Attempting to do both seems to be counterproductive at the worst, and inefficient at the least.

3.   Who is Most Qualified to Teach NL401?

This begs the following questions: If the course is divided into a practicum and true capstone, who is most qualified to teach the capstone portion? Surface Warfare Officers are undoubtedly the most qualified to train Midshipmen in the areas of maritime skills and practical shipboard knowledge. They have all been Division Officers fairly recently in their careers, and as such should be able to effectively and efficiently culminate the maritime continuum and train and educate Midshipmen on the duties and responsibilities of Division Officers in the Fleet.

However, those who are stationed in the Seamanship and Navigation Department, approximately seventy-five percent of NL401 instructors, have had no formal training or education in the leadership education aspects of NL401; they do not appear to be qualified to synthesize and integrate all the material covered during the Midshipman experience. Furthermore, their close proximity to the Fleet and the implementation of DOSP, may be a hindrance to satisfying these important needs. Data suggest that they are too focused on ensuring students are proficient in bridge watchstanding skills.

Therefore, it is my recommendation that Seamanship and Navigation Department be responsible for teaching the practicum, while LEL be responsible for identifying those who are qualified to teach the capstone. LEL DMPs and PMPs have the backgrounds most suited for meeting the affective and cognitive needs of the course. Potential candidates who should be considered are senior Surface Warfare Officers with academic backgrounds, and SWO LEAD program graduates who have a master's degree in leadership and human resource development. It is important to note that this change does not constitute a departure from SWOs teaching future SWOs. The research indicates that substantial cultural and other educational elements would not be met if instructors were pulled from other warfare communities. For example, the affective and cognitive needs of a future Second Lieutenant in the Marine Corps and those of a future Surface Warfare Officer vary significantly.

4. Individual Needs

Recommendations on closing the gaps pertaining to individual training and educational needs of NL401 are fairly simple and all but one rely on a close integration of YP personnel and material, and the NL401 curriculum. The practical portion of NL401, or the separate practicum, should be aligned as closely to a shipboard Division as possible. The recent disestablishment of Naval Station Annapolis may aid this endeavor. The Chairman of Seamanship and Navigation Department is now responsible for all aspects of YP Operations, which should eliminate communication and scheduling difficulties, and aid in the implementation of this program. In this scenario, the instructor will fill the roles of the CO, XO, and Department Head. The students will fill various Division Officer, enlisted, and collateral duty roles, and the enlisted personnel assigned to YP duty will fill the roles of actual enlisted members; the actual Senior Enlisted member will act as the CMC. With this recommendation, it is important that the class sizes be as small as is feasible and practical. Each member of the "command" will be responsible for the traditional duties of the roles they are filling; and most importantly, they are held accountable in the same way as they will be on their ship. To add to the utility of this recommendation, students will change Division Officer roles periodically. This researcher believes the three most important needs this will address are 3M training, fitness report and personnel evaluation writing, and the affective needs of a SWO Division Officer.

a. 3M Training on YPs

Each NL401 section taking ownership of a YP or several YPs, presents an opportunity to learn 3M in the most hands-on means available to USNA. Students, under the supervision of the instructor and senior enlisted, should maintain the 3M material for each YP as they would their Division's. They should sign weekly and quarterly boards, conduct PMS spot-checks, and perform all other related duties. Having an actual 3M program to manage prior to arriving in the Fleet, is an opportunity available only to USNA graduates.

b. Fitness Reports and Performance Evaluations

As Division Officers in the "command," students should also be responsible for personnel evaluations (evals) and fitness reports (fitreps) during the reporting periods that are congruent with their course schedules. Under the supervision and leadership of their Department Head and Senior Enlisted they should practice writing either real or mock evaluations. Additionally, part of the course material should be a compilation of actual fitreps and evals from the Fleet, which cover a variety of performance levels. Finally, at the end of the semester, they should be required to write their own fitness report. This will provide them an opportunity to reflect on what they have learned over the semester and give them the practical experience necessary to succeed in this area in the Fleet.

c. Affective Needs

The extensive integration of YPs and the NL401 practicum will also address some of the affective needs

identified in the research. Holding the Midshipmen responsible and accountable for the safe operation of the ship, the ship's mission, and sailors, will instill a sense of responsibility. I also believe that interactions with enlisted personnel, when students are acting in the capacity of Division Officers (i.e., held accountable for tangible outcomes), will encourage assertiveness and will bolster communication skills. Furthermore, this scenario will provide the opportunity to synthesize and integrate the material from the capstone portion of the course.

d.   *Character Development Seminars*

The final recommendation for ensuring individual needs are met is to increase Midshipman participation in Character Development Seminars. These seminars provide a venue for integrating and synthesizing material, an opportunity for Midshipmen to discuss character related issues in a relaxed environment, and also provide a means for ODEV faculty and staff to gauge the "moral compass" of the Brigade of Midshipmen. It is my recommendation that all Midshipmen be required to attend at least one seminar per semester. Furthermore, seminar leaders should be required to submit written reports from each session to the Chairman of Officer Development Division, via the Deputy for Character Programs.

5.   Feedback Mechanisms

The final recommendations for improving NL401 involve gaining feedback from various entities at various times. As stated in Chapter one, NL401 is the most dynamic course at USNA. Feedback on how the course is doing at preparing Midshipmen to be SWOs is critical to ensuring its future

success. Also, feedback can and should be used to gauge how well Midshipmen are preparing themselves. The following paragraphs elaborate.

a. Summer Cruise

Data suggest that there is a direct correlation between performance and effort put forth during Midshipman summer cruise, and performance as Division Officers in the Fleet. As such, it is my recommendation that Midshipmen be evaluated on their summer cruise performance. This will do two things:

> 1. It will allow USNA to evaluate the performance of its Midshipmen relative to other commissioning sources.

> 2. It will require Midshipmen to perform.

In order for this to be effective, faculty and staff need to hold Midshipmen accountable for their performance; there should be consequences for poor performance on summer cruise. The "Three M's," meals, movies, and mattress, will no longer be acceptable summer cruise behavior for USNA Midshipmen.

b. Fleet Perceptions

Secondly, this researcher recommends soliciting the Fleet for feedback. NL401 must adapt to the needs of the Fleet. A simple survey given to all USNA SWO Ensigns a year after commissioning in my opinion is the most feasible feedback mechanism. If NL401 administrators know what Ensigns wished they were taught, the effectiveness of the course could be increased dramatically.

c. Comprehensive, End of Semester Test or Project

Finally, feedback should be taken in the form of an end- of- semester test or project for the Midshipmen. NL401 is an academic course, and as such, students receive a grade. The potential to fail the course must be real. It should be taken seriously and a comprehensive test will force the students to demonstrate their ability to integrate and synthesize the material they have learned during their four years at the Naval Academy.

6. Recommendations for Further Research

This research appears to only scratch the surface of identifying and meeting the educational and training needs of NL401. Much potential for further research exists. Each need area, Division Officer, watchstanding, affective and cognitive, could be separate theses in themselves. Furthermore, the qualitative nature of this research does not lend itself well to hard numbers. Due to the time constraints presented by interviews and focus groups, only small samples of stakeholders were reached. A quantitative survey regarding the needs of the course could be administered to a larger population of respondents, and would provide a more clear understanding of the needs of the course.

D. CHAPTER SUMMARY

The purpose of this chapter was to summarize the results of the data analysis, and discuss the relationships between the results and current USNA academic policy, leadership and professional education curricula, USNA education and training programs, and current Fleet

policies, namely DOSP. First, a summary of findings was presented. Next conclusions drawn from the data were discussed, followed by the presentation and discussion of several recommendations that were based on the data, literature, and background.

The training and educational goals identified as the top priority were affective needs, followed by cognitive educational needs, Division Officer training needs, and lastly, watchstanding training needs. Based on the needs identified, the research concludes that NL401 should be structured to focus on integrating and synthesizing the USNA experience with Division Officer training and education in order to be most effective as a capstone course; it should be a combination of dome and spire. The research also determined that the leadership continuum and its subordinate maritime continuum are highly effective at training Midshipmen in watchstanding skills.

The primary recommendations made were to divide the course into a practicum, focused on maritime and Division Officer skills, and a true capstone focused on culminating the Midshipmen leadership, ethical and character development experience. Instructors for each portion should continue to be SWOs, but the capstone instructors should have academic credentials in the areas of leadership education or human resources; or at least ample leadership experience required to teach high-level material. Other recommendations included total integration of YP operations into the curriculum, feedback from the Fleet and from the students, and making participation in Character Development Seminars mandatory.

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